

The Beat Within

Volume 9:22

A Weekly Publication of Writing and Art from the Inside



Art By Joseph

This surely isn't the appropriate space for this editor to pay tribute to one of America's greatest treasures, but what the hell, everyone needs a place to share a little something, something. And that something we want to share with you readers of this editor's note is probably something only you elders will appreciate, unless you youngsters have been fortunate enough to have been turned on to great music by your elders, yet, if not, we hope that one day you, too, will get yourself exposed to the music of the late, great Ray Charles, who passed away last Thursday at the young age of 73.

Most of you, we assume, have an idea at least of what Ray Charles looks like, but did you know what gifts came out of this blind man (since the age of five) with the Ray Ban sunglasses and the beautiful affirming smile, warmly hugging himself (while the audience cheers on)? Boy, Ray could play piano with the best pianists of any era! He could sing like no other behind his piano, which he played so eloquently, while toe-tapping in tune to the rhythms of his tight, tight band. The man could assemble incredible arrangements!

For your information, Ray Charles was known as the "Genius." Brother Ray touched millions of lives (from all over the world) with his music. He toured non-stop up to his death. Ray didn't wait for a new album to come out to set out on a tour, he played year 'round, or so it seemed.

He not only helped give birth to Soul music in the early 1950s, but he was one of the few artists who truly could mix musical genres in a tasteful way. Not many people can say they recorded with Guitar Slim, Milt Jackson and George Jones. Shoot, Ray has sung duets with folks from Norah Jones, Willie Nelson and BB King, to Lou Rawls and Betty Carter. And up to his death, he was completing a CD of duets with various artists, which will be released later this year.

Ray Charles was a guy who completely blurred all the boundaries of American music. Who else could do just that? In the early sixties (1962), Ray recorded the album "Modern Sounds in Country and Western Music" and that incredible album was truly revolutionary. Take a listen someday if you can, it's a priceless gem!

Over the years, the "Genius" mixed blues, jazz, gospel, R&B, country, everything, and it all sounded so natural. You know, The Beat received an email the other day in relation to the death of President Reagan, which read, "Ray Charles actually made a positive, lasting contribution to American culture — and he wasn't responsible for the deaths of tens of thousands of Central Americans. And he wasn't responsible for making homelessness a nationwide problem. And on and on. So maybe we could start a movement to get his picture on the ten or twenty dollar bill. What I'd say!" We agree, Ray Charles is an American institution. You ask what his hit songs were? Shhh, slap on Ray's "What I'd Say," "Hit The Road Jack," "I Can't Stop Loving You," "Georgia On My Mind" to his amazing rendition of "America The Beautiful." How 'bout "I Got A Woman," "Let The Good Times Roll," "Hallelujah I Love Her So," and "This Song's For You," to name a few. There are hundreds! Brother Ray received numerous awards over the years, from Grammys and Lifetime Achievement Awards to having his recording studio in LA designated as a landmark last April.

Ray Charles left us so many great songs. His music will never die; it will always sound as fresh as ever! It's a shame some of you will never see him in concert. If you have access to video, we suggest you rent the PBS special, "American Masters," where they beautifully document the life of Ray Charles. Or read the authorized biography, "Brother Ray." Lastly, get access to tapes, albums or CDs of his recordings, or ask The Beat to bring in some of his music, or to turn you on to essential albums, and we'll do just that. Damn, we could conduct a class in the hall or in the office dedicated to Ray Charles and his sweet soul music! Let's do it! There was no other, when it comes to Ray Charles. If he was playing solo, with a big band and the Raelettes, or with strings and a full-blown symphony, he made his concerts so memorable, because Ray Charles means more than the music. Damn, it was Ray Charles!

That's are brief spew on Ray Charles. We encourage you to try something different, something other than MTV bubble gum music, BET, hip hop, rap and current FM R&B and soul music when you want to listen to music, you might just like Ray Charles. Most do.

Ray Charles is American music at its finest. America has seen the likes of giants like Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald and Frank Sinatra, to Billie Holiday, Aretha Franklin, Stevie Wonder and Hank Williams, from Willie Nelson, BB King and Chuck Berry, to Elvis Presley, Bob Dylan and, of course, Ray Charles. These fine artists, and of course many others, (we're sure) have helped shape our arts/music culture into what it is today. We are so spoiled with amazing music. Enough! Moving on . . .

Ok, this single shot of an issue is packed with some knockout pieces to chew on. These writers hold very little back as they take us into their world while either expanding on this week's topics, or on a topic of their choice. Before we acknowledge this week's POW (Piece of the Week) recipients, we want to spell out for you the topics we brought to each workshop to start the group conversation before the pencils met paper. The first topic read aloud and addressed was the topic most incarcerated folks think about while their freedom has been taken (maybe forever). The topic is "Doing It Over — What have you done in your life that you wish you could do over, and how would you go about doing it over? Sure we expect the obvious replies, about not doing the crime that put you in the system, going to school, following the rules of probation/parole, avoiding the gang life, the game, etc.

But we also expect many of you to step up big with details as you share a part of your life, and envision on paper, a way of doing something over. Give us a scenario that will take us into your world. Show us the equation, the pros and cons, the limited or numerous choices you can come up with, then, take us down a path of your choice and let's see what happens and where you go with it."

The second topic was equally powerful, given that too many of you readers know all about "Running From The Truth — All of us have problems, and there are many of them that we run away from. And sometimes, the truth can seem like a problem, so a lot of us run from it, too. Has there ever been a time when you've run from the truth? Have you come up with excuses instead of facing it? Why did you run? What are or were your excuses?

So tell us what you're running from."

Our last topic, was the open-ended, in-your-face question, "What's your problem?"

Besides an excellent group discussion on the topics and plenty of stellar pieces stemming from the topics, we have chosen the following pieces for various reasons as issue 9.22's POW winners. They are, in no particular order, Mike, who steps up big from Santa Cruz with his piece, "CYA Experience." There's Spooky from San Mateo with his amazing tribute to his mom, titled, "Mi Jefita." Also from San Mateo, the incredible poetry from Broken Glass, she moves us with her knock-out piece, "It's A Beautiful Day." Brendan steps up huge from San Mateo with his thoughtful piece, "My Problem." From the 150 Crew, there's Ben, speaking with the voice of experience as he creates the poem, "Stop Running." What about the profound and heroic piece by Vincent, "Save Our Generation!?" Or the very creative and consistent Tishay with, "The Night My Heart Spoke." And Beto's painful yet gripping piece, "The Use of Violence." Out of SF/YGC's YTEC there's Josa with her positive piece, "Praise For Walden House," and last but not least, the amazing poetry of Conrad from Marin County with "Sons of Corporate America." Thank you writers for your priceless work! Now read on and tell us what you think!

Every week we drop the following on you, so bare with us, we simply do not want you readers to miss out on our Tenth Editor's Note Writing Contest question. The question is, what is your all-time favorite movie and why. We are curious about why this movie moves you so much. Tell us how it relates to you. Tell the readers about a time, maybe the first time, you saw this movie. We want the inviting details about why this flick of flicks will always have an important place on your movie shelf/heart. Be creative when painting the picture of this special, special movie.

With this said, the contest deadline for your submission is July 31, 2004. We will award four prizes/money orders for our favorite pieces. Our top prize is a \$100 money order for first place. Followed by a \$50 money order for second place, and for third and fourth place, \$25 money orders. With this said, good luck writers in attempting to create a moving and telling piece about your all time favorite movie. We encourage all of you editor's note readers to take this topic on! Now take us to the SHU, no, no we mean the show, the movies, you know, the big screen. It's "showtime" and we're not talking about the LA Lakers.

Oh, by the way, before we close this editorial note up, we want to inform you that The Beat will be closed for workshops and office work from July 5 through July 9, resuming workshops on Monday, July 12, 2004, with the goal of having our Beat Within publication complete the following day.

At the time this editorial note was written, there was no cover art gracing The Beat yet. So, we wonder, has the mighty Orozco found a home as the weekly cover artist? We must say it is so great to have the talents of Michael Orozco back in the pages of The Beat. We are sorry he is locked up, but we're glad he has an outlet to share his world in The Beat. An inspirational artist at that. We do hope any aspiring artists will see Michael's art as inspiring, not intimidating. This man is an OG artist. He is a gifted, talented individual who has been drawing for years and years while struggling with addiction and incarceration. He is a man who has found an outlet while dealing with the day-to-day rigors of loneliness while incarcerated. Enjoy his art and make it a reason you want to capture your dreams in the free world when you get that chance, or to see how to utilize your time wisely while detained. Forget chillin'!

In closing, in a couple days, a few of us will venture up to the state capital, Sacramento, to speak to policymakers and politicians. We do hope we can get these powerful individuals to walk away thinking about our work, about you and the conditions you live in, with the hope that they will keep the conversation going, and that these panels will eventually lead to a change in policy, be it in juvenile hall and/or CYA.

Ok, since we started this editor's note off paying tribute to Ray Charles, we'll end this ed note dedicating this issue to the man most responsible for fathering Soul music, Ray Charles. Did he do anything for the incarcerated? We do not know, but what we do know is if you have ever listened to his music, he definitely made you get in touch with your soul, his songs were brilliant. Just listening to his music is an education in soul. To quote the late great crooner Frank Sinatra, "He was the only true genius in our (music) business." We'll conclude by thanking Brother Ray for all of the wonderful music that spanned well over fifty years. And may we all find our talents and the opportunity to excel at them. Wouldn't that be nice? See you next week.

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The Beat Within, a weekly newsletter of writing and art by incarcerated youth, is published by Pacific News Service.

At The Beat Within, we go through a lot of trouble to censor inappropriate sexual remarks, foul language, and gang references. There is enough tension in our communities already—we don't aim to bolster it. It is in The Beat's interest to promote peace and unity. Our goal is to educate one another.

The Beat Within publishes the opinions and views expressed by the participants in our workshops. This is simply the pure voice of the youth. The views you read do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher, editor or staff. All rights are reserved. Nothing from this publication can be reproduced without our written permission.

To our writers: What you write could be hazardous to you. Your words have consequences, and could be used to incriminate you. Try to illuminate your feelings and viewpoints without running the risk of providing ammunition for those who might use your words against you.

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Art: Much props to everyone for the great art this week.

Spiritual Advisor: Jack Jacqua

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Writers: Thanks to all the participants in our workshops in the San Francisco's Youth Guidance Center and Log Cabin Ranch School and the Walden House Facility, Maricopa County, Arizona, Walden House, Canon Barcus Community Center, San Mateo, Napa, Santa Clara, San Luis Obispo, Alameda County, Santa Cruz County and Marin County Juvenile Halls. As well as Riker's Island in New York City, Natural Bridge in Virginia, and Hidden Truth in Rhode Island. If you have any questions or comments about The Beat Within, or if you would like to become a subscriber, contact us at: 275 Ninth St. SF.CA. 94103 or call (415)503-4170 or check us out at

www.thebeatwithin.org

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Counselor's Corner

From The Beat: The following piece comes from a counselor in Santa Cruz County Juvenile Hall. Hey "Mom" — to have touched so many lives in a loving and caring way qualifies you for good dreams and peaceful sleep. We are so glad and so grateful for the work you do. We honor you. And we give you our thanks.

Why Am I A Counselor?

Which came first — the chicken or the egg? Was it being adopted as an infant into a family with a father who carried me around on a pillow because he was afraid he'd drop me, or, was it because I was influenced by an extended family that provided foster care for many children?

Maybe it was just my love of kids that pushed me over the edge when I was considering adoption and providing foster care myself. Whatever it was, providing foster care for over 350 children and adopting three, over a period of 13 years, made for some of the best years of my life. Giving these kids a place to be safe, to be fed and to be clean, or giving them homes until they were adopted was very rewarding. While they were with me, they were my kids, and it was so hard when it was time for them to leave, no matter how happy the ending was.

So, when my years as a foster parent came to an end — what did I do? What else — I came to work at Juvenile Hall. So even though the kids in my home are all gone, I come to work every day to my new kids in the Hall. When they leave, again, I have mixed feelings. I will miss them, but want so badly for them to be successful, healthy, happy and FREE.

It's all about the kids.

-“Mom”, Santa Cruz Staff

From The Beat: The following is a beautiful sendoff from one of our all time favorite counselors Ms. Wadud, to another of our favorite counselors, Ms. Westbrook, who has left Unit 2. Both are wonderful counselors to the youth and very supportive to The Beat Within. We know both of you will keep in touch and remain encouraging to each other.

To Ms. Westbrook

Just wanted to give you a big “Thank you” to Ms. Westbrook, who has made this past year at work in Unit 2 an absolute joy! She is a very caring individual, a great counselor and a dear and true friend.

I pray that God continues to shower His blessings on her and all who she loves. It was a pleasure working with her and she will be truly missed by Unit 2 and me! See you around the Hall, Ms. Westbrook!

Love always,

-Ms. Wadud, 150 Counselor

CYA Experience

It's the place you think
you'll never see.
You hear the stories
and you get a picture
of what goes on there.
When you get past the gates
the people try to seem tough,
yet underneath it all
we are all feeling the same —
scared, hurt, uneasy,
unaware of what to do.
Take it from me —
it's a place you don't want to be, or see.
I spent two out of four years that I had to do.
The courts pulled me out,
and hopefully, I'm on my way home.
While I was there I could see the hate
between two people
and the hurt from being away from their
families.
As for myself,
I hope I won't go back.
You see people come and go.
And you see the incarceration
corrupt their minds.
For those that go —
I hope the best. Stay strong.
Those who don't —
change your life.
I made friends who I will help to support.
I made enemies who I pray for.
To all the friends I made who are still there,
I hope the best and hope to hear from you soon.

I have written on the topic of CYA. From personal
experience, I hope no one goes there.

In my time there I saw many things that you
don't see every day, and it's scary. You don't want
to go to sleep, out of fear. And you don't want to
do anything because you don't know what will
happen.

Some people think that YA is a place that
will make you look cool. Well, think about your
family and the time you will have to be away from
them — not how you might look to your friends.

-Mike, Santa Cruz

*From The Beat: Great piece Mike. You've learned a lot and you
have good advice for anyone who might think YA is cool. We
wish you the very best. Get your education. Work hard. Have
a good life. What advice would you give to someone
who was on their way to YA and wanted to make
it a positive learning experience?*

**In my time there I saw
many things that you
don't see every day, and
it's scary. You don't want
to go to sleep, out of fear.**

Mi Jefita

Mom, I would like to apologize for putting you in pain,
having the family go insane.
I know I'm not the best son you had,
and I know at times I make you mad.
I'm sorry that I had you in tears,
sorry that I had your head thinking of these fears
that won't last long with the life I'm living,
but you taught me to never stop believing.
I know I'm the oldest and I should have been a role model,
but I'm sorry I ended up taking the bottles.
I know I never gave you the time.
Now I'm here serving a 664/187-murder crime.
Once again I'm sitting in this cell.
I could only imagine you going through hell
thinking of me being back in jail,
dreaming of you and thinking of you 24/7
wishing I was with you 'cause those days felt like heaven.
Mom I pray to God on my knees
to let me free.
I sometimes wish I could turn my life around
because I know I wouldn't have let you down.
I know I was always riding around with my homies in my town.
I should've took you first
'cause I shouldn't have left you with a frown.
Mom, all I could say is I promise I will be the best
'cause I will never fall to rest
with the love and heart
we got for each other 'cause we will never be apart.
I love you mom.

-Spooky, San Mateo

*From The Beat: That was an amazing tribute to your mother. It's a shame how
many people get incarcerated and find out who's really down for them. Most of
the time it's the family members that are down. But hey, some people don't even
have that. Do you feel blessed to have such a supportive mother? Does she know
that you feel this way about her? Will it remain the same when you get out? Or
will you spend more time with your homies than you do with her? Only time will
tell... Your relationship with God also interests us. You write that you pray
to God to set you free, but what do you think God is asking of you
in return?*

Through The Sky

I walk through the sky
And wave goodbye
No more tears. No more lies
As I wonder through the sky
There's a beautiful light up ahead,
Does this mean that I'm dead?
"Wait, wait I have so much I haven't said
I'm too young to be dead!"
A voice says
"This is the life you led"
"Who said that, who's there,
Where am I going — I'm scared..."

I got out at seven in the morning
Broke out at the break of dawn.

-Broken Glass, San Mateo

*From The Beat: If you died tonight, would you be happy with the way
your life is going now? What would you wish you could've done? Do you
have regrets? What are they? We hope death doesn't come to you
before you get to do everything you want to do. (We hope it
doesn't come to us, either...)*

An Untold Story:

(Pieces That Were Missed/The Hard Times)

Well back when I was little, I could have been your neighborhood orphan, except I had a roof over my head, my family, and a car. But I still had the hard times that a lot of people had.

When I was in school, I used to go to school with big ass holes in my shoes that came from the Goodwill or the Salvation Army. In fact I think all my clothes came from there. Now don't think 'cause my clothes may have been worn by someone else that I wasn't clean, 'cause I was. And it was hard for my mom raising three kids on her own and having to pay bills, rent, car notes, buy clothes, and food.

But as I got older, I left the Goodwill and Salvation Army clothing to Wal-Mart and K-Mart clothes and shoes. Then I thought I was the shhh, but my mom was still struggling to make sure that we had what we needed. I started to realize that my mom was struggling, so before I turned fifteen, I got hold of my first gun and pulled my first lick with some of my homeboys.

When I came home with that money I had stolen, my mom asked where I'd gotten it from, and I told her. But she didn't seem to wanna accept it 'cause it was stolen money. However, I convinced her that we needed it more than anything else so she took it, and made me promise that I wouldn't do it again.

I broke that promise, and when I felt like we were having money problems, I would do it again and again until we'd gotten enough money to live off of for a while. By then I was getting my shoes from Payless and really thought I was the shhh, but I wasn't because we were still having problems. My mom had got laid off, and it was really bad then 'cause that only led to more licks and more tears brought to my mom.

I can remember a time when our power had gotten cut off. We used a barbeque grill to cook food and a car battery and headlight to use for light at night. That really made me go pull more licks until my mom found a job. And I had stole enough money to buy a lawn mower to make easy money mowing lawns, and I saved money until I was old enough to work. But for some time I was still pulling licks all the time so I could make sure I had what I wanted.

To make a long story short, we overcame problems and never had to worry about not having money again, but for some reason, I got a kick out of doing it because I thought I could never get caught, but I guess I thought wrong because years later I'm in jail for the same damn thing.

See, a lot of people I know say to me that I must have had a good childhood, but the thing is, I really never had a childhood. I was trying to make money to live, and I guess that's the reason why I am today.

I didn't write this for people to feel sorry for me. I wrote it for me, 'cause I look back at the past and compare it to how hard I had to work to get what I got today, and I just feel like I've let the burden take its rest.

'Til pencil meets paper and my creativity starts flowin' again, holla!

-Youn1, San Mateo

From The Beat: Though you've been through a lot, you still shine like a diamond. It's admirable of you to step up like that for your family. But couldn't you have stepped up in other ways? You say you didn't have a childhood, so do you think that fact will hinder your future? How's your family doing now? What will you do for them when you get out? What will you do for yourself? How can you provide for you and your family without breaking the law?

**See, a lot of people I know say to me
that I must have had a good childhood,
but the thing is I really never
had a childhood.**

**It's sunny here
But somewhere
There's a violent
storm**

**Planning and
destroying life**

It's A Beautiful Day

It's such a beautiful day
I wonder who's being buried today.
No smog in the skies
Just a beautiful sunrise
a gentle breeze
caressing the trees
When I get out
I hope this is how it will be
How many mothers will cry against the sun?
How many lives have just begun?
It's sunny here
but somewhere
there's a violent storm
planning and destroying life
Today someone will lose their husband
or wife.
This is the last day of someone's life.
Somewhere out there
two lovers are holding hands
as their bodies melt into the
enchanting sand.
Someone's graduating today
with a smile from ear to ear
a smile through all the pain
They had to endure
just to get here.
On this beautiful day
someone's in prison
reminiscing on what they could have been
wishing jail wasn't their end.
Today someone's
dancing
Today someone's
laughing
Someone's
singing
Someone's
screaming.
People are hugging
People are crying
People are being born
People are dying
But through my window
the sun's still shining...

-Broken Glass, San Mateo

From The Beat: You explained the struggles of life really well. And we enjoyed how you personified objectivity with those last two lines. Isn't it a trip how life is just a balance of opposites? One man's loss is another man's gain. Smile now, cry later. But your poem explains it better. If living is a perfect balance between negative and positive, how do we ensure we're being positive most of the time? Maybe we'll find a solution as we look out of our windows and share the same sun that shines on you.

Stop Running

look over your shoulder
who do you see
a million other people
who act like me
go ahead
get a head start
on your mark
ready set go
traveling whichever way
the wind blows
where will you go
no one knows
but one who
is above all that
bleeds breathes
sleeps and eats
you're running fast
but can't get away
stalked by
your own shadow
tormented by
your conscience
(if you have one left)
running so hard
that your heart
feels like it's gonna
explode out your chest
all of a sudden
you feel stuck
then you feel
the cold steel
of handcuffs
refusing to hear
as if you were
wearing ear muffs
then reality kicks in
and religion begins
asking god
to forgive you for sins
keep running
but you will never win
once you get caught
or put in a box
that's when
your freedom truly begins
stop running from the truth

-Ben, 150 Crew

From The Beat: You didn't sign your poem, but we knew it was you! Who else? The voice of experience with a twist, a revelation's woven in — and therefore you insist freedom begins after you get caught when you face the truth and expand your thought. When you stop running away and just stand with truth, you're living proof surrender leads to victory. For truth not only sets you free, it teaches you how to stay that way after your release. It's the cure for 'hood disease.

stalked by
your own shadow
tormented by
your conscience

My Problem

I got a problem with people telling me mine. It seems like everywhere I go people are hating. They always try and stop what makes me happy.

I stopped dealing and messing with others for fun. I'm respectful to my parents and help my little brother when I can. I even clean stuff to make the house look better.

All this means nothing to those who judge me for the simple fact that I get high. I stopped meth, coke, and dex. Still, they try to shape my life like I'm some kind of clay sculpture. They tell me they're morally justified because it's for my own good. Well, I say forget them.

Am I getting high? Am I making them hunt for the chronic? Hell no. I don't hurt people or take their money. I don't ask others to provide me with noth'n'. All I want is to live my life, and I'm asking for nothing in return.

From the bottom of my heart I say with the utmost sincerity, screw the system. You have no right to do what you do.

-Brendan, San Mateo

From the Beat: Some people will not be happy with giving a POW to a piece that extols the virtues of weed. But that's not why we're giving it. You have stated a position clearly, and supported it with good, strong reasons. We admire you for giving up those drugs that hurt you and can hurt others, and for the respectful way you approach life. If we have any wisdom to add to this piece (regardless of how any Beat reader feels about marijuana), it is that while the system may have no moral right to do what they do to you, they do have a legal right. In some ways, this is one of those activities that is crime when you're a juvenile and ignored when you're an adult. Unfair? Yes, but that doesn't get you off the legal hook. So, kick back and then watch your back... (And by the way, we have no worries at all that you can be molded into the lump of clay they want you to be. You're the sculptor of your own life, whatever they want for you...)

**I was going to commit the worst
mistake in my life, that day.**

The Use Of Violence

My problem is all the anger I carry with me. I believe that my anger began at a young age. I think it was when I was eight years old, that's when I began to fight a lot and try to hurt other kids.

As I began to get older, I began to get mad even more madder day by day.

But Beat, I'm never going to forget the day my brother's friend made me mad, and I was going to commit the worst mistake in my life that day.

I remember I got home from school and he kept talking shhh to me, so I ran to my dad's room and grabbed his thirty-eight special. I loaded it up and came back outside and I was crying with anger. My brother's friend was gone. He knew I was angry so he ran off.

I swear to God, Beat, I was going to kill that punk. Then I went back into my house and put my dad's gun back and then I began to hit the wall, full of anger.

'Till this day I think about what would have become of my life if I would have killed him. Well Beat, now you know my problem, which is anger and I only relieve it with violence.

-Lil' Beto, 150 Crew

From The Beat: You deliver such a gripping piece. Good thing he was gone by the time you came back. Looking back on this situation, how do you think you could have handled it differently? Can you think of better ways today to deal with your anger that is less destructive? When you get angry, you need a way to release all that frustration without creating more problems for yourself. Of course, we would suggest writing your feelings down. It's actually a good way to release your frustrations. If that doesn't work, ask for help. Don't be afraid to get help, it just might help. Shhh, it WILL HELP if you are serious about addressing your anger problem.

Songs Of Corporate America

I'm tired of this cage
I'm tired of the rage
I'm tired of playin' this same game every day
I'm sick of society
I'm sick of propriety
I'm sick of this shhh that flies by me
The commercials and ads
Creating the fads
Your fits can be whack
At the drop of a hat
'Cause the media says
That style ain't comin' back
They tell you what to think
What to wear
What to drink
Who to see
What to be
You're a sheep
To these fleets
Of companies
I'm sick of fightin'
Sick of tryin'
To keep my mind
They can have it
I don't want it
Go ahead and put your label on it
Nike
Sean John
Reebok
Just please stop
I like my dirty old kicks
And I'll take my licks
'Cause my fit
Ain't sick
I don't give in
It ain't no sin
To think for yourself
You don't need no help
From CEOs
Sayin' you need clothes
That cost thousands of dollars
That'll make 'em all holla
Jus let it go
Your mind is your own

-Conrad, Marin

From The Beat: Another amazing poem from Conrad. Congratulations! You obviously don't need anyone's approval. You have a really original mind. But you've also said that school bores you, so how can you pursue whatever interests you, whether school answers your intellectual cravings or not? Great luck to you and have a beautiful summer!

**I see kids of nine, ten,
and eleven years of
age trying to follow in
our footsteps!**

**You don't need no help
From CEOs
Sayin' you need clothes
That cost thousands
of dollars
That'll make 'em all holla
Jus let it go
Your mind is your own**

Save Our Generation

Why live a lie? Telling yourself every day that you are something you know you're not. In life, we have choices to make. Everyday when we wake up we have to choose whether or not we want to open our eyes or keep them shut.

But, still, another thing we have to deal with is change. I have to change, because the life I lead is all good for nothing. The thing is, we tell ourselves that we don't need change, while knowing in our hearts that change is exactly what we need.

Choosing to change is far from easy. We as human beings, are sometimes scared we will lose friends or even a reputation if we choose change. For me, change will not come easily, but I am ready to make a change — to stay off the streets and stop doing drugs.

As I get older, I notice that every year I get a little worse. I am now seventeen years old and have been coming to Alameda County Juvenile Hall ever since I was as young as eleven years old!

The reason I feel that more of my peers need to change in this day and time, is because every time I get free, I see kids of nine, ten, and eleven years of age trying to follow in our footsteps! Because what they see us do, they do! A lot of people in the ghetto don't have a role model, so they watch and do what they see people do in the streets.

Many have tried to save our generation, but we continue our failure to comply even with the law! So, even if no one else is ready to join me, I will still accept the responsibility to change my life and be a better example for my kids when I grow up. And when I am released to the streets, I hope to help some child make a better decision than I did at his age.

Change is not easy, but we all must change at some point in our lives — and there are some things we must change at once! Peace and love:

-Vincent, 150 Crew

From The Beat: The changes you propose to make are profound and heroic — to stay off the streets and stop doing drugs! They are profound because you propose not to make this or that superficial adjustment, but attack the problem at its root. Even if the cause may be endemic, personal and institutional poverty in your community, you recognize that the choices you've been making are more directly influenced by your drug use and your street scene. Moreover, your willingness to take on these twin demons of addiction — streets and drugs — is nothing short of heroic! Addiction is characterized by obsession (you can't stop thinking about it) and compulsion (you can't stop doing it) — so the changes you're undertaking are, just as you say, anything but easy. Start by pushing a wedge between thought and action, even when it's all you can think about. Meanwhile fill your time with positive (including fun) activities to distract your mind and re-educate your heart. Props on your quest. We wish you the best. Keep writing us about the journey, your successes and temporary setbacks. If you fall, just get back on track.



Praise For Walden House

My time at Walden House, I have learned a lot about myself. When I first got to WH, I felt a little awkward, I wasn't used to the type of personalities that I had to deal with, not only with peers, but also with staff members. I also wasn't used to a therapeutic community at all.

I wasn't too fond of authority. I had to learn to suck it up and humble myself. At first I didn't see how much the program would help me, but after being there for a month, I wasn't there to just do time. I thought that since I have to be here, I might as well get something out of it.

I also didn't see that dealing with different types of personalities, and attitudes would help me grow, and also change my attitude. So, I also learned to have more acceptance with people, consequences, and myself as a person. I also learned to give respect to myself and others.

I had family therapy while in Walden House, so I gained a lot of trust in myself and in my family. In the past if I had a problem I wouldn't stick around to deal with it. I would usually run. I have learned to wake up and face my problems. I have also learned to express my feelings differently. I have learned some alternatives such as art therapy. I have learned to walk away from certain situations, also to use my emotional mind frame and my reasonable mind frame, and conclude with a wise mind frame.

In this I have learned a whole lot of impulse control, and other things I'm supposed to know.

-Josa YTEC, SF/YGC

From The Beat: This sounds like a ringing endorsement for Walden House. Most youngsters aren't as open to the consequences of their actions as you are. Why do you think some kids don't work with the programs they are sent to? Or, to put it another way, what allowed you to open up to the possibilities that were presented to you? Do you think other kids can embrace Walden House the same way you did? Will it be easy to remember all those things you have learned in the face of temptation? How can you pass these lessons on to other young people in your situation?

The Night My Heart Spoke

i woke up in the middle of the night
shivering and holding myself tight
i don't know what it was but it wasn't right
my heart speeded fast-paced
i start to feel like someone slapped me awake
i just couldn't take it
i jumped to my feet and my legs start to shaking
my tears were running like they just seen a ghost
what i really needed was to be comforted the most
i felt like i was gonna die
i had to throw up but something pushed it aside
my mind started to flick and my body felt sick inside
my temples started to kick and all i could do is cry
i did it as loud as i could but no one minded
i wondered why
i laid down on the floor sweatin' from head to toe
feeling my blood run through my veins real slow
i was stuck like i'd just been struck
i couldn't move it wouldn't let go
my nerves were tucked
i started to lose my breath
my heart pounded so hard it felt as if
it was about to bust out of my chest
i don't know if it was trying to get away
or remind me of the pain it felt that day
it got broke
i just know it
was afraid that it started to note
tishay i'm scared
i don't want to hurt anymore
or fall apart
but i can't help it
he's got a piece of your heart
finish now
or forever start
your finding love in emotional art
i know he loves you
he owns his part
now you have to take
responsibility into your hands
'cause everything don't always
go as planned
i know how you feel
'cause i tell you the truth
but from this point on
it's up to you
well all i can do
is pray for the best and hope
and remember the night my heart spoke

-Tishay, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Your emotional art has become a permanent part of those who read your lyrics each week in the crowded pages of The Beat. For your words speak with such emotional force that player mentalities and healing realities part course, and your heartfelt truth pours down the page with despair, pain, fear and rage, all mutually engaged in a struggle to see whether love will rise again. Do broken hearts heal once they've paid a price in the end? And if they do, will they again be fooled by bad love's using and bruising of true sincerity? Can a wounded heart conceive of true love with spiritual clarity? Take it slow as you watch your heart grow and make its way toward recovery — and it will show you new discoveries.

**I thought that since I have to be here,
I might as well get something out of it.**

My Problem

I have a little problem, it started when I was thirteen. I started getting high off a pill called Dexedrine. I was already smoking refer and drinking while listening to Sublime. Then my friend offered me cocaine, I snorted sixteen lines. I loved the way I made me feel. Sped me up while it made me numb. But when it was all gone I'd search hungrily for the very last crumb.

Then I met a boy, he was sexy as could be, he had beautiful eyes, his name was Danny. He gave me a line of ecstasy, said it was pure MDMA. I didn't really care if it was cut. It mad me fly away, then I went to Vegas and smoked a little crack. I was officially in love with it by the time I got back.

My boyfriend also liked it. We smoked every day, while robbing houses, stealing cars, at the pawn shop we got paid. Then I did something stupid and almost ended someone's life, that same night I smoked crystal meth and it got me high as a kite.

I loved this drugs ways; it made me feel the best. I loved how I could stay high for weeks and never have to rest.

Then I started stealing from family and friends just so I could get some dope and put in my ends. Now I'm in the system. I've been to two rehabs and in jail four times. I regret ever committing all of those crimes. I have a little problem, it eats away at me everyday like little bugs. I'm sixteen and will forever be addicted to drugs.

-Candace, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Candace, you do have a problem here, but it's not the end of the world. Acknowledging that there is a problem is the first step. You may be addicted, but you can get help. Addiction doesn't mean that you have to do drugs for the rest of your life. If you're ready for help, there is help out there. Just ask, there are resources.

Her Eyes vs. Mines

I've broken.

I've destroyed most of her heart.

I disrespected.

I disobeyed the only love of my life, my beautiful mother.

Tears of pain and struggling, trying to make me happy.

All I ever brought to her was more tears and more disappointment, and embarrassment.

The most beautiful woman that ever live.

No disrespect to where I grew up, but this is where all her hope fell to sleep.

I've ran away.

I brought drugs into her home.

I brought a man to sleep in her house.

Fifty-seven years of her life, lived with no negativity, no violence.

Expecting me in all the same.

Born and raised in a community of love and where everyone took care of one another.

Here, every man stand for themselves.

Here I've selfishly threw her away.

Disrespect her beliefs and sold my body on the streets.

-Kanley, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Kanley, why? Why did all these things happen? What caused you to behave this way? Now that you have a little time-out here in the Hall, how are you going to change? We are assuming that you want to change. You recognize that you hurt the love of your life (your mother). You need to prove to her that you can once again live in her community of love. Right? It's time to repair what's broken.

My Grandpa

About a year ago, my grandpa had a major stroke.

He was hospitalized in Sutter Hospital and was put on the top floor. He wasn't being attended to as well as he could have. They weren't feeding him or anything like that. The nurses were even saying that he would die.

My mom and some of my relatives raised hell. Finally they started to feed him. For the most part, he couldn't move. Once they started feeding him and giving him the nutrients he needed, he was able to open his eyes. My whole family was so happy to see progress.

After a few days of constantly visiting him and talking to him (even though he couldn't respond,) we started to ask him some questions. Little by little he was progressing until the point where he was able to nod his head "yes," and shake his head "no." We were so happy. We had absolute faith that he would pull through.

April 21st, he died. I cried so much. I couldn't accept the fact that he could die. I couldn't accept the fact that now he was dead. We had his funeral and I was one of the people who got to carry his coffin. He died at the age of eighty-three. Rest in peace.

-Tim, Marin

From The Beat: You imply that if the hospital staff had been more attentive to your grandfather, that he might have been able to live, Tim. Why didn't they feed him? Maybe your family and you helped keep him alive for a while, don't you think? What was your grandpa like? What was there about him, that you loved him so much? Do you think you have any of the characteristics that he had, that you respect? How can you keep his memory alive?

The Hood

I was born and raised in the east of the bay
Where I learned to gangbang and slang rocks all day
With nothing to do but make money on the street

Have to sell bags to have something to eat

My mama raised me alone

Because my punk ass daddy was gone

And when he would call, I wouldn't pick up the phone

I know he's a sucka, has no love for his son

He wanted to pick me up, go and have some fun

But that's not what I need

I need a real relationship with my dad

Before my heart starts to bleed

I can't keep livin' this way

With my mama raising me

All alone in this world of brutality

Can't he see the struggle?

Can't he see the pain?

That he gives my mama

Like a gun shot to the brain

But you can feel it 'cause you ain't dead yet

Blood leaking down your face all warm and wet

Dad, you trick, you think I'm gonna forget

Even before I was born you had my life set

-Ant-Dogg, 150 Crew

From The Beat: You're an incredible poet, Ant-Dogg. We can feel your pain, even if your dad can't. There is no excuse for his absence and he probably doesn't know how to be a father to you now. Do you think you can one day talk to him about what you need from him as a father? By cutting him off completely, he may think you don't want anything to do with him, and from what you write, you do enormously want to get to be close to him. There is a lot of sadness behind your anger. If he is a bad influence on you then we would encourage you to stay away from him until he and you are strong enough. Be rest assured that the pain will pass.

Just Another Little Note

this is for my love
and i wish i could be with ya
hoping and wishing
that i could just be with ya
instead i'm sitting in the hall
thinking of ways to release my pain
i used to slice my wrist
and watch it bleed till i couldn't close my fist
it might sound insane to some
but it eases the pain of missing loved ones
like life itself so blessed and so blind
but i can't get any of them out of my mind
i'd die for any one of them at the drop a dime
now i'm feeling this sorrowful remorse
for having committed these crimes
it makes my heart want to explode
then lie like a dead body across the road
all exposed like a dead corpse
the only way to release my mind
from this psycho-poetical verbal abuse that's hitting the line
my love always told me not to get caught in that bind
talking about heaven or hell right here on earth
but i'm going to make it to heaven and escape this curse

-Baby Face, 150 Crew

From The Beat: We had to guess at some of the words, 'cause your handwriting is hard decipher. But you're such a creative writer, we probably missed as often as we hit on your meaning. However, one thing's for sure, cutting is not a cure for the pain of losing your freedom. Mental clarity and physical health might help you find heaven on earth, but cutting is a self-inflicted curse.

**sitting in the hall
thinking of ways
to release my pain**

Doing It Over

If I could do it all over again, I don't know if I would. I've had a lot of good times living life in the streets, but there's also been times where I wanted to get out, but it was too late. I was in the game too deep. I have made it way too easy for them (the system) to rule my life.

I know things usually happen for a reason, and I truly understand that. I just wonder where I would be if I had stayed in school instead of trouble. I wonder if I did the right things, or not, and was it all worth it.

I've gotta keep my head up in the storm and never let their standards get the best of me. But it's lonely and depressing at times to pretend that I'm not affected by some of my choices. I can't let them see me cry. Why should I let them strip me of what I need every last minute of my life.

It's time I decide my worth, the worth of a wasted beautiful mind or the worth of a woman beyond a price tag.

Our minds are priceless; never let them sell your intellect.

-Broken Glass, San Mateo

From The Beat: It's one thing to put a price on someone else's mind. But it's even crueler to put a price on someone else's heart. Why should you hide your tears from anybody? If people can't appreciate the emotion in tears, then they're the ones with the problem — not you. Sometimes when we try to find logic in our feelings, we end up realizing that our mind can actually pollute what we feel, so that instead of enjoying the human experience by letting our emotions run their course, we find ourselves exerting wasted energy by trying to reason with our feelings. What do you think?

IF I COULD DO IT OVER

i would redo the night
i got arrested
and spent a month in hell
— jail
i would redo the night
me and my friends
were hanging out
when i was supposed to
be in the house
i would redo the night
the guy pointed me out
and said i robbed him
and assaulted him
with a deadly weapon
i would redo the night
the police took me into custody
and booked me
i would redo the night
i got my clothes taken away
and they told me to put these county clothes on
i would also redo them words i heard
from the judge "you're staying"
if i could redo them i would
but the reality is i can't
the only thing i can do is move forward
and by this time next tuesday
that's what i'm gonna do
move forward
because hopefully i won't be here

-Shawn, 150 Crew

From The Beat: The only thing on your list that you would have the power to change if you had a chance to redo it, is the first: staying home like you were supposed to. After the robbery, the rest was out of your control — being arrested, identified, booked, jailed and sentenced. Maybe that's what your poem means: do right from the start and you'll spare your heart all this pain!

**I have made
it way too
easy for them
(the system)
to rule
my life.**

Rape Without Mom's Knowin'

Me, when my grandma raised me, when I was a baby, and then when I was ten years old, me and my grandma went back to the islands (American Samoa and Hawaii). And then when I was over in Hawaii, I had a cousin, and we was close like brothers and sisters. But then one day me and my cousin always smoked weed at our favorite cuts out there, and then we had some trees and we went to our cuts and smoked.

But I was lightweight high, so then the next thing you know he pulled down my pants and felt on me. Then he started closin' my mouth and then started rapin' me, but then I was trying to get up but I wasn't strong enough 'cause I was twelve and my cousin was 19 going on twenty. And after that night I told my older brother. My brother looked for him. He had a weapon in his hands and a kind of like Samurai sword in his hand and went to look for him.

When he found him he dropped him and put his foot to his neck then ripped his shirt and sliced him 5 times. Then he pointed the gun into his mouth because he raped me. But then my grandma came and saved his life and then after all that my grandma told me, don't tell my mom 'cause she might fall back into a stroke and lose her life. And I don't want that to happen. So now I'm telling it now. It's been too long for me to keep to myself.

-Lil' Kiki GU, SF/YGC

From The Beat: What a crazy, terrible situation, and what a difficult thing to keep from your mother. It must have felt good to have your brother defend you, but we're glad your grandmother kept him from taking it that far. Thank you for sharing your painful story with Beat readers; we're sure many of them will feel what you've been through. Now that you've written it down, do you feel any relief? Have you ever talked to a therapist or any caring adult about it? Do you have any advice for others who have been raped? We wish you the best.

Visit With Pops

The other day I had a visit with my dad, and he told me that he's gonna let me go back home, but it's gonna be my last chance. If I mess up this time when I touch down home, he's gonna kick me out.

He asked me if I was dying right now what do I have to look back at? What have I accomplished in life? I really haven't accomplished nothing in life, I told him.

So he told me to do something with my life so that way when I'm lying there dying I have something to look back at and say I actually did something with my life. I have been thinking about what he said a lot because it's the truth.

-Lil' D, San Mateo

From The Beat: In truth, it's really your dad who deserves to get the piece of the week with his fine advice. We started thinking about it ourselves, and we are relieved to know that we have some accomplishments we could point to at that moment. With your dad's sound advice in your head, you will step up to the next level so that you leave your own positive footprints in the sands of time. Your dad is a wise man. You be one, too!

**The harder you try to
do good, the better
your own outcome
will be.**

Sometimes

Sometimes I think
Sometimes I don't

Sometimes I have money and I still feel broke

Sometimes I ask God, "Why do we die?"

Sometimes I get high like a bird in the sky

Sometimes I feel low like the depths of hell

Sometimes I ask God will my life prevail?

Sometimes I think

Sometimes I don't

Sometimes I got money and I still feel broke.

-Teflon Don B4, SF/YGC

From The Beat: This seems so simple, TD, but it's actually quite profound and universal. What do you do when you feel like the depths of hell? If you sometimes feel broke even when you have money, do you ever feel rich even though you're broke?

**(My dad) told me to
do something with my
life so that way when
I'm lying there dying
I have something
to look back at and
say I actually did
something
with my life.**

I Would Change Nothing

I'm not proud of my past, but I'll leave it alone.

I've done bad things to others and myself, but going back to move things around would be considered cheating. I've done things that I feel anyone would change in a second, but that just isn't me.

I would feel better about myself if I could change my life as it is. I know it's much harder but what is it worth if you don't work for it. My message to anyone who is dwelling on changing the past: "you can't," but what you can do is decide your own future.

The harder you try to do good, the better your own outcome will be. My challenge to The Beat readers is to put as much effort as you put into breaking law into doing right.

-Noño, San Mateo

From The Beat: So what have you decided about your future? What are you going to do? Does your challenge apply to everybody, including yourself? Well, how can one go about putting effort into what's right? What are the specifics of that great advice? Give us some more of your wise words.

Cycles Of La Vida Loca

I was raised in East Los Angeles. I've always been into gangs. It runs in my family from my grandpa to my dad to me. It's a cycle that hopefully one day it will break.

Since I was little I've always wanted to be like my dad. When I was about three, my dad got sent to State Prison and I didn't see him until twelve years later. I grew up without a dad.

I started chilling with all my cousins and rollin' on the block. I've always stayed on the main street of Pico Rivera. My mom was always trying to keep me out of trouble, and giving me the best she could. At the age of seven I started boxing, and that was my main theory in life. I've been boxing since.

Well, I went to Garfield Elementary and Garfield Middle School. Well things started getting hot in my 'hood at the age of twelve. I got rushed into the barrio at twelve and started gaining my strikes. I thought everything was a game and didn't care.

Within a year and a half, I got shot in my leg when I was coming out from the boxing gym by some of the rival gang members. Well, after that I still thought it was a game. I got locked up in LA Juvenile Hall in Glendale.

I can stay that I lived a good childhood. It was hectic, but fun, and I got the respect I needed. Now I go back to East Los (East Los Angeles) and they still respect me.

I'm not writing this to encourage people to join a gang, but to learn from my mistakes and change their lives. Now I'm about to be 18. I'm still down for the 'hood, but with caution. I'm getting my GED and I'm going to go to CSM (College of San Mateo) when I get out, and live my life to the fullest like an eight ball. RIP Choco.

-Juan, San Mateo

From The Beat: We truly admire your style of writing, Juan. It's very straight forward, very easy to follow and understand. We have more trouble understanding the life of guns and gangs you describe because we didn't grow up in that environment, and we wish young people didn't have to learn the rules of life the way you did. But you have obviously taken some valuable lessons from all your experiences, both on the outs and on the ins, and you are applying those lessons to your life. We can picture you doing just about whatever you set your mind to. Just be careful if you're living life like the eight ball not to scratch!



**I'm not writing this
to encourage people
to join a gang, but
to learn from my
mistakes and change
their lives.**

Forget The Bull

What am I thinking
What am I going to do
What am I without you?
It's crazy thinking about
Where my life has taken me
If I didn't make these choices
Where would I be?

So many times I have had an opportunity
To do the right thing
And took the easy way,
The easy way got me here today,
I dug my own grave...
So now what?
Do I just give up?

Why should I when I have so much to give
So much more life to give
I need a husband,
And some kids.
This is stupid

I don't mean what I'm writing
This isn't from my heart
It sounds like reciting
Let me start over,
Yeah I got myself here
But I'm not staying for long
The show must go on
No more of what you want to hear
Poetry is not a sing-a-long
I'm gone keep it real
Honestly, I don't know what I feel
I'm taking it day by day
Doing what I can
And yes, I will do it
Without anyone else's hand...

-Broken Glass, San Mateo

From The Beat: Once again you've hit us with an inspiring masterpiece. However, we fear that people become so self-empowered that they forget how impossible it is to do everything without anyone's help. Sometimes we need to let our pride go, so we can take advantage of the opportunities presented to us. You have so much potential that if given the chance, your possibilities would be endless. What do you want to do when you get out? Are you interested in college or would you rather work? Can you see yourself doing both at the same time? Hopefully we'll hear from you when your giving orders at a round table discussing what you need to do to expand your already successful business.

Feel Me

when you hurt for so long
it's like a scar
that you've had for a long time
and you can't really call it like it hurts anymore
it just aches
and when you hold the pain in for so long
it's like when you inhale
weed smoke and hold it in for a real long time
when you exhale
nothing comes out it disappears
you don't seem to know where it went
but it soaked inside your body
and you know it's there somewhere
listen here —
learning lessons can be hard
but learning is the hardest start
'cause you never really knew the bad part
when you was doing it
until you're suffering
from the consequences going through with it
i did mine on my own
with or without anyone
i would've had to face differences
and everyone is blind at times
but mostly during dark times
you can't seem to see yourself gettin' through
you thinkin' you might trip
and that's what you're afraid to do
i'm going down a shady path right now
but once i get out
i'm going to take another route
it's only one thing i'm taking with me when i leave
i ain't gonna say 'cause you won't believe
i don't want need nor deserve this kind of life

i let it lead me — no one told me
“no don't do that it's bad”
or “do this it's good”
even if they tried i never understood
it was too late
and i was testing myself
i had already got the picture
i looked at it like
“i don't need anything else”
all i could say is
“i know what i'm doing”
so i was like “end”
i bumped my head so many times you can't imagine
that's why i always have headaches and sadness
i find a new positive way every day
i will make the best out of every situation
even if it seems it can't happen
you'll never know till you try
and if i'm not trying i'm doing it
'cause i'll never want to completely ruin it
it's just influencing in every way
if you do or do not want to stay
either way
that's all i got to say
feel me

-Tishay, 150 Crew

From The Beat: So many of us had no one there to teach us, at least not what we most needed to learn — so we got burned! Then some of us learn and some of us don't. Why doesn't everybody see, once consequences become reality? Like you say, they're thinking (though it feels deeper, more like what's real), “It's too late.” Or, “It can't happen.” Still the bravest decide to try, and they struggle and fight with no end in sight! But you touch a deeper truth: beyond trying is — doing! You can't always do your best, but if you face the test and get through it day by day, then later you look back and you have to say, “It's a fact. I didn't believe I could do that.” And ever so slowly you come to believe in you and what you really can do.

**I ran away from the truth,
now I'm running away from the fact that she's gone.**

I Want To Do It Over

I should've stayed when at that time she needed me
tha most, but no, I wasn't there. I knew she was dying
slowly, but I ran away from that thought. I couldn't stand it
knowing that she was in the hospital. That's why I did all
these things that messed me up. To forget the thought of
her suffering.

One day, I just woke up and I'd do anything for her. I
went down the block; I stole some change from the store to
get money for transportation to see her. It took me like half
an hour to get there. I looked all raggedy, but I didn't care.
I just wanted to see her. People were staring at me at the
hospital when I got there. I ran up to the counter and yelled
at the lady to tell me where Kimberly was. The lady said in
a voice that would make you mad, “It's 222, don't do that
again.”

So I ran around the hospital looking for the room, I
circled the hospital about two times before I finally found
218. So I thought it would be down the hall, so I ran down
and I finally so it 222. I slowly turned to the door knob
and knocking at the same time. I saw my uncle and auntie
crying. I went up to them and gave them hugs. I looked at
Kim, she was breathing slow and heavy. I went up to her,
gave her a hug so big, the nurse told me to back off. I
kissed her on her sacred cheek, I whispered to her that
I love her and I'll always be there for her when she

needed me.

She's been in the hospital for three days now
and every night it made me cry my eyes out. I went
home crying after fourteen hours in the hospital without
sleeping. I fell asleep around 4:00 in the morning. The only
thought in my head was her.

When I woke up, I saw everyone crying. I knew what's
up, but inside of me, I hoped it wasn't true. “We have a
family angel now,” words that I didn't want to hear that
morning. I wish I can turn back the hands of time and
should've spent more time with her when I could.

I love you so much Kim. I ran away from the truth, now
I'm running away from the fact that she's gone.

RIP Kim, I Love You
I should've stayed...
Don't run away...

-Gelo, 150 Crew

From The Beat: It's hard to have something like that happen and all you can do is accept it. People refuse to accept things that happened to them, so they run away from it. God hasn't given us the spirit of fear! You stay strong and hold on because change is coming. Focus on your life and what you have to do. Kim wouldn't want you to be feeling like this right? She would want you to live on and reach your goals. You do what you think would make her proud. And don't blame yourself for what happened to her. You know things happen for a reason. Don't let this be the reason why you're life isn't going right. Get up off your back and dust ya shoulders off. Everything is going to be all right. It's what you do today that will affect your future. Don't let this be the effect your future. You can do it. We know you can!!!

I Love You

no matter how much you hate me
i will love you
no matter how much you love
i will love you more
your love only makes love
multiply by four
i know right now you may hate me
so i am gonna let fate be
what guides your heart
i will at least know i did my part
i know i didn't claim you
but don't think that means i don't love
if it did would i come flying to you
when all i know is that
my heart wants you
i know i messed up
but don't let it end so abrupt
don't let one chip hole
make the whole sculpture fold
why lose everything
over such a little thing
when my love for you is bigger
than anything
i know you think i'm lying
but if you take your love away
i'll be dying
slowly day by day
in the most painful way
no gun nor knife could inflict
pain like this
guns and knives are painless
'cause they kill you quick
you leaving me would make me wither
slower than a bird flies with no feathers
i can understand your anger
and your pain
but being without you
will drive me insane
i know what you're steady thinking
"how can i trust you
when you abandoned me already"
you gotta understand
that i am just a man

but i would completely understand
if you never wanted to see this man
but if you leave i will no longer be a man
but a broken vessel untapped
full of love for you that will be capped
capped in a bottle never to be opened
unless your heart one day opened
to me once again and let me in
but if you leave me my chances are slim
because by that time i will be dead
without life before the word
would have been said
for i will have given up hope in true love
and given up a ghost of a heart to the dove
who is the spiritual essence of our body
i don't mean your future i mean your soul
if and when you leave me
mine will turn cold and dead as coal
for your warmth and love will have gone
so these are my words for you to decide
if they are real or a con a lie
i know no other words with which to say sorry
other than the simplest way
— i — am — sorry —
words could never heal the pain
no matter how many words it's still the same
yet i hope this will prove to be a measure of the strength
of our relationship and not of its length
not even with a lover's honeyed tongue
can i control you
not even with my extravagance of words
can i deter you
all that is left to say is
— i — love — you —
and even if you leave
remember my love is only for you

-ShoMoe, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Indeed your words are poetical and sweet as honey, yet promises of love are like promises of money; not to be wholly believed until received. Still, the memory of all the love you gave before you messed up the way you did, bring added strength to your extravagant words intended to uncover what pain has hid. Perhaps when this passionate poem is heard, the sound will stir her soul and by love's power her wounded heart begin to heal and grow whole. Your fate will be revealed only as time transpires. So thanks for sharing the fear and desire of your heart with readers in here who may also fear love will fall apart.

a mind without education is a mind that is lost.

Devoted To My Education

If I could turn back the hands of time, which I know I can't, but if I could, I would do a lot of things different. First off, I would be a lot more devoted to my education. During my incarceration, I learned education is very important and a mind without education is a mind that is lost.

I also wouldn't get involved with my friends who were doing crime and involved with drugs. I would have changed my friends and never used any drugs. Once I started smoking, I changed a lot, from thinking about my actions to just doing what I wanted to do. Then my life was like a dream. The whole time I was using drugs, I was not caring for anybody or having any emotion.

Then my life got hit hard by me being

incarcerated. To tell you the truth, that's the best that has happened to me since the day I was born. I always thank Allah for giving me the opportunity to change my life. Now I know I changed and I'm waiting for the day I get out, so I can prove to everyone I really have changed my ways.

Finally, I would love to say that everything happens for a reason, so I really don't want to change anything. I'm just waiting for the pieces to fit together and to go home to my family.

-Abbas, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Your gratitude for life is wonderful to read, Abbas. It's never too late to get your education. Many people keep learning their whole lives. How will you respond to your old friends when they ask you to go kick it with them? As far as changing things, you're right, you can't change the past but you can change your perception of the past or how you think about the past. It's wonderful that you are using this experience as a gift and not a curse.

If I Could Go Back

Doing it over, if I could go back two years, I would have kept my brother out of trouble and in school. But I chose to get locked up, and stay in the streets. If I could do it all again, I promise you I would do it different and keep my little brother YG alive.

I feel it's my fault because he looked up to me and it's a lot of things about life and the streets that I should have told him. I feel selfish, because I held it in and took life for granted, and that's something that I shouldn't have did. And now I have to live with knowing that I probably could have saved my bro's life.

Doing it all over, man, I wish I could, because life is hard now, but it ain't like life wasn't already hard. But if I could do it all again, I promise to you I would do it different.

-Young Gudda B2, SF/YGC

From The Beat: That's a heavy weight to be carrying; we're sorry. How are you dealing with the feelings that come with all that? Do you have anyone to talk to about the guilt and sadness and anger you feel? Can you dedicate living a good life to your little brother, to treat yourself with the care you wish you had shown him? Don't be selfish with yourself.

Change My Perspective

If I was able to go back and do something over in my life, it wouldn't just be an event. I would go back and change my perspective and motivation on education. Not saying that because I'm not intelligent, it's just because I realized that education is an opportunity for yourself and your future, and the only way to better secure your future is to get a good education.

I felt it was something I would change because I didn't take my education seriously until my sophomore year in high school, which to me is too late. I have grades for state college but not for university, which is only hurting my future.

If I could go back, I would take advantage of my education to better help my future for my job, life, family and kids.

-Lim, San Mateo

From The Beat: We don't read a lot of writing describing the importance of education. So we are ecstatic to read how much you regret not taking school seriously. We can read the determination you have in your piece. So, what is your favorite subject? What would you study if you were to go to college? Do you think you can make all of this happen when you get out? Well, we do too...

The Truth

I feel like I used to run from the truth before I was incarcerated August of 2003. For these past months I've just been dealing with it. I was running from everyday life 'cause it was real grimy comin' up in my household and city of San Francisco.

I grew up viewing such things as robberies, thefts, burglaries, drug sales, female prostitution etc. Weed and Alcohol was an everyday thing in my spot. So I found myself firing up blunt after blunt, downing bottle after bottle like it was nothing. But it was something.

The way I was dealin' with the truth was not real. So my advice to you is don't run from the truth even if it hurts.

To all my peoples and associates that's down right now as I speak, "Do the time, don't let the time do you." One Luv, Beat.

-Jr B5, SF/YGC

From The Beat: We think you've put your finger on why drug and alcohol abuse are so common. We appreciate your advice not to run from the truth even if it hurts, but what will make people follow this advice? Can anything be done to reduce those terrible problems that make you want to turn your head away? Could the government do anything that would make it easier for you and for those like you? What?

**I found myself firing up
blunt after blunt, downing
bottle after bottle like it
was nothing. But
it was something.**

I Wanna

I just wanna go home
I'm sick of brushing my hair with a comb
I wanna cuddle up in my bed
I'm sick of taking meds
I wanna say "What's up?" to my brother and sister
I wanna tell my mom how much I miss her
I wanna eat out my own kitchen
I want someone to hear my voice and listen
I wanna talk to my PO to get out
I hate going to my room, just to pout
I wanna listen to music and watch TV
I want everyone to forgive me

-Tanya, Marin

From The Beat: Nice poem, Tanya. Why don't you send this poem to your family so they'll know how much you appreciate and miss them? It sounds like you won't be back in Juvy any time soon once you get out! Can you remember what you don't like about Juvy when you get out and stay out? We hope so!

Education Before Babies

If I had a chance to do something over, it would have to be me being a father at the age of 17. I would like to change this, because I wonder what my life would be like if I would have not got my girl pregnant.

I love my little girl, and I don't regret bringing her into this world. But I wonder what it would be like if I would have went to college first, and then got married and bought a house.

So if there was anything that I would do over in my life that would most likely be it.

-Leon B5, SF/YGC

From The Beat: We wish every youngster in and out of the Hall could read what you wrote and really believe it. We can see that you love you daughter, but we know how much easier it would have been for you, for your baby's momma, and for your baby herself if you had waited until you finished school. Thank you for writing on topic, and being so honest.

Running

Why do I run? Well, as complicated as it may seem, the reason I run is to escape the regularities of everyday common life. When I get bored of "being good," I start romancing about my past drug use. When I think about my past party days in that positive form, it usually motivates me enough to call up one of the old homies. They come and swoop me up and then comes the good ol' relapse. This customary ritual happens every time I start to do "good."

Now I'm seventeen years old, five months pregnant, and my baby's daddy is in jail for an attempt to distribute and sell crystal methamphetamines. He will be gone when our baby is born. See what I got to show from all my running away? Nothing but a bad drug addiction and a baby with no father.

-Jillisa, San Luis Obispo

From The Beat: We hope you can beat your addiction and raise a beautiful baby. How are you gonna do it? It sounds like you want to get clean, but are you ready to make the commitment? Will your baby's future be powerful enough to motivate you to stay "good" when you get that feeling you want to run? What are other options when you get bored, instead of running?

**See what I got to show
from all my running
away? Nothing but a
bad drug addiction and
a baby with no father.**

Inspiration

Life is inspired by those who showed me faith.
Days after days without relying on that eighth.

Those who judge others on a certain race.
Two strikes being filed without a chance to erase.
Here I sit to propose a way to live a new life.

The future that lies ahead might strife.
Finding new ways to live without crime.
New friends motivate pain doing hard time.
Looking forward to new decisions as I finally walk
And talk among others about rolling on our block.

-Shane, Santa Cruz

From The Beat: Sounds like you're ready to let your pals know that there's nothing romantic about being incarcerated. Stick with it Shane.

**I ran from the help that
I needed and refused it
and only made
it worse for myself.**

What To Write About

What do you want me to write about?
Do you want me to write about the drugs,
how I think I'm in control when I'm not?
Do you want me to write about the sex I'm ashamed to be
having but I can't help it?
What about the tears,
the tears I shed for my sisters and brothers
that I'm no longer allowed to see,
or the pain, the pain my father inflicted on me?
What do you want from me?
Do you want me to write about how confused I am?
Well guess what, I can't!
You know why?
Because I'm confused
and I don't know what to write about.

-Danielle, San Luis Obispo

From The Beat: You can write whatever you're feelin', even if it's a list of questions. We appreciate the contribution. It sounds like you have topics to write about that you care about. We hope to hear more from you about your battle with addiction, the brothers and sisters that you love, and other things you think about.

I Was Too Stubborn

I've been running from my problems for years. I couldn't accept the fact that people were just trying to help me. I didn't want the help, because I was too stubborn. I always felt like people were out to get me and that they thought I was nothing.

I ran from the help that I needed and refused it and only made it worse for myself. When I ran, I just fell into a trap of drugs and illegal activity. I made things worse for myself by putting myself in bad positions to get hurt by people and abused in many ways.

Finally, I have been able to accept the help and it has made me a better person.

-Jenny, Marin

From The Beat: It's amazing that you accept some responsibility for abuse you've suffered. Do you have people whom you can go to when you want advice and help, but who won't try to impose it on you when you don't want it and prefer to figure out your problems yourself? It can be really hard growing up, because some problems you could never deal with one day, you figure out the next. You're probably changing rapidly. Can you keep up with your own changes? It can be a real challenge. Good luck!

Experiences That Cause You To Change

Experience that has caused me to change is using drugs and alcohol. My thoughts and my actions changed dramatically — from having a good spirit to having a dead one. I couldn't act the same person. You couldn't tell me anything without me getting defensive. I would walk the streets all night long, and sometimes find no place to go but the park.

Drugs brought me to Juvy, and I didn't care. But now I'm clean.

-Jorge, Santa Cruz

From The Beat: You seem very alive to us, and "on top of it" too. Stay clean. Do good. You've learned an important lesson.

Colors Of Jail

My problem right now is being here. My other problem is my mother. Me and her really don't get along. She is a big problem, because she tries to get me into problems, then I get mad and do something even worse. The reason I'm in here is because we were fighting over the phone. The thing that really got me mad is that I paid for that phone, so it kinda made it mine. Here is a poem using colors:

Colors Of Jail!

Red is for my heart that beats fast when I run
Orange is for the shirt that they make us wear in jail
Yellow is for the trays they make us eat out of
Green is for the grass you see outside of the fences
Blue is for the sky you see when you look up
Purple is for the mark you get when you hit yourself against something.
Jail!

-Nancy, Marin

From The Beat: Nice poem, Nancy. It can be difficult for both mother and daughter when you are growing up, Nancy. Your mom needs to know that you are accepting responsibility for yourself and are becoming independent, without pushing you out into the world before you're ready. She already knows how hard it can be, and maybe she's still trying to protect you. Maybe your being in Juvy is hard for her to deal with. Maybe it scares her, because she can't watch over you if you get in trouble. Can you let her know you're OK, and talk to her about your next moves in life, so she can feel included and realize it's OK to let you go, even if you make mistakes?

My Niece

I never knew that I could love after everything what has happened to me. On July 19, '02, my life changed forever. The most beautiful thing was in my arms. Her name was Gabrielle and words could never describe her beauty. I was so confused that day 'cause I had this warm feeling.

I never knew what it was till I left. I went home and was heartbroken. I thought it couldn't be love 'cause I didn't even know her. But at that moment I realized that I couldn't live without her. Till this day I can't believe it, that I am in love, in love with a stranger.

-Kay, San Luis Obispo

From The Beat: What a heartwarming story. Have you thought about writing her a letter while you're in here, letting her know how her life changed you, brought you love, so that when she's older she'll be reminded of how special she is? Since her birth, have you found love in other people/places?

The Kindest Thing I've Done

The kindest thing I've done for someone is for my mother. When I had my job, she wanted to buy a living room set. I was working and I had money saved up, so I just paid the rent for two months.

I did it because I felt like I owed my mom for taking care of me for so long. I felt like I owed her that and a lot more. So when I get out of here, I am going to pay the rent for four months.

I just have to get out of here and get another job. I want to make my mom happy. I love to see her happy. So that's what I'm going to do — get out and make her happy again.

-Maurice, Santa Cruz

From The Beat: That is indeed a kind thing. You have a large heart. Keep listening to that part of yourself, the part from which good things flow. Be well Maurice.

The Last Time

When I get locked up
I never miss my family
They seem like the last thing on my mind
Since they helped me get here
I try to stay calm
And hope that I won't be here long
Sleeping is a good escape
You forget where you are for a few hours
I hate wearing these clothes
And taking three-minute showers
My boyfriend is who I think of
Before I fall asleep at night
Once I get out
I'm going back to school
Maybe I'll get my job back
Hopefully this will be my last time here
I want to be home
Eating dinner with my mom
I was lying
I do miss my family
They're all I got left

-Audrey, Marin

From The Beat: It can be maddening to realize that you need the people who may have "put you" in Juvy, your family, Audrey, but who really is responsible for you being on the inside? Getting out of Juvy, getting your job back, going back to school and getting your family to trust your good judgment again is on... you! Part of growing up is being able to accept the responsibility for your future and get your life going in a way that you like? How do you want your future to go? How will you accomplish it?

When I Was Running...

When I was running I came upon a river.
I fell in and started to shake and shiver.
All I was doing was trying to recite my rhymes
About what I'm going through in these hard times.
So now I'm reciting rhymes, but I'm all wet and mad.
So I'll keep my rhymes a secret and even though I try,
I can't seem to find out why my little clock won't wind.
I try to sit and have a feast
But trouble follows like a beast.
I play hoops and I make a swish
And I say I wish my life was always fun like this.
I'm sitting here, listening, but my mind just roams
Thinking about the people I hurt,
and all those broken bones.

-Maurice, Santa Cruz

From The Beat: Fine poem Maurice. Keep writing like this and your clock will wind itself and your life will be full of swishes. When you think about the people you hurt, what do you feel? How do you deal with your feelings?

**I do miss my
family
They're all
I got left**

My Life Is Cool

I woke up quick
I was feelin' kinda sick
I had a variety of cereals
I really couldn't pick
So I grabbed one
I rushed out fast
The time had already passed
So I didn't take a bath
I went to school
Everything was cool
Till I got home
Stuff went wrong
That's why I'm sitting in here
Writin' this poem
Then my PO came and saw me outside
I ran from him
It was many places to hide
Then I got caught
It was all my fault
Now I'm back in jail
Writin' my thoughts

-Young Josh, Marin

From The Beat: We bet you couldn't believe your bad luck when you saw your PO on the outs. What were you doing wrong? Weren't you going to school like you were supposed to? What have you learned from being in Juvy? Once you get out, how are you going to make sure you never have to go back?

What's Passed Me By, Etc...

While I've been in here, there's not a thing that's passed me by, because everything out there will be waiting. So when I'm in here, I just do my time. I don't think about the outs. I feel the same regardless. And that's how I'm gonna continue to feel.

On another matter, I'm really sorry to hear about the little girl whose father was killed. Nothing can bring him back, and I know how that feels because I grew up without a father figure in the picture. It's not easy, but I learned from it. Hopefully she will learn from it too and be OK when she grows up.

And returning to what it's like in here — when I look out my window I don't wish anything. I just chill and lay my head down and read a book. Because I don't have anything to wish for. I keep my head on strong and just wait 'til my time is up. That's what we all do. We don't wish. We just wait.

-Maurice, Santa Cruz

From The Beat: Those last two sentences — that's pure poetry. Keep reading and keep writing. We think you'll eventually be full of wishes. We think you've put your wishes in deep freeze mode and that when you get out, they'll thaw out. You have a good heart.

**I never imagined this life
for me.**

**But behind it, there is
always a reason why.**

Playing Mind Games

Yes there have been times when I have ran from the truth — and not just once, but a few times.

One of the times where I have ran from the truth is like with my mom and dad. Like, I still think that there is hope that they will get back together when I know for sure that it will never happen, even if we won the lottery. I play games in my head, like when he comes and picks me up to go to his house my mom will be like, "You know what? Let's put all the b.s. aside, and let's get back together for the better."

But I know it's not going to happen because they can not get along.

-Derik, San Mateo

From The Beat: It is completely understandable that you would want your mom and dad to solve their difficulties and become a family again. But, of course, you are right that this is not going to happen, and that you are finding it difficult to accept that truth. We hope that you can learn some things about their failed relationship and its effects on the children so that maybe you can avoid some of the same mistakes so your future children won't suffer as you are suffering.

The System

My teenage years have gone to the system, doing time. Group homes, Juvenile Hall. I never really did anything with myself because I put a lot of time in on the streets, doing my thing. I never thought about my future. I just thought about the present and the past.

The rest of my fellow inmates did the same. Threw away high school, didn't go to the prom. I could care less when I was on the streets. I was intoxicated with drugs and I couldn't think straight. I don't want to sound like the rest by saying I regret it, but it's true.

I've been taken from my family for a long time. I never imagined this life for me.

But behind it, there is always a reason why.

-Jorge, Santa Cruz

From The Beat: We wonder if you've wondered about those reasons. What happened that pointed you to the streets instead of "home". Come to grips with those reasons and you're on the path toward building a different life, a better life. Look around. There are a lot of caring adults around. Yes, even in the system. So many of the adults around you now are there because they want to help. Talk with those with whom you feel comfortable. Don't be afraid to ask for help. By the way — you write well. Thanks.

**We don't wish.
We just wait.**

Rewind

If I could start over and go back to the start

It wouldn't really be all that hard

Take it back to 1986

I wouldn't change nothin', won't change it a bit

I would grow up the same, Mom only one there

No father in sight; did he even care?

Kick it with the same heads in my town

Keep the same boys, always stayin' down

So if I could change anything, it would be nothin'

Life's lessons are learned by mistakes and strugglin'

That the truth, no stories or bluffin'

-Peanut Head, San Mateo

From The Beat: We agree that we learn from our mistakes (or, at least, we should learn). But we can't believe that there aren't some things you wish you could undo, some cruel remark you wish you could take back. After all, you can forfeit your life for some mistakes, which is the end of learning.

Holding It Down On Forty-Eight

Yeah yeah! Just bounced back from that forty-eight they placed me for — that shhh was treacherous. Man, they did me dirty. I was two-stepping it for about two days. This how it went down:

A'ight, so I'm doing good, right, handlin' my business. So they tell me, "Get yo' shhh, you moving to room eighteen." So, you feel me, I grab my stuff and get on.

So I go to the room and the first thing I do is search it for contraband, ya dig? So I find me a pencil. I use it to write a letter, then I toss it out, feel me? So then I tell my roommate to check his side to see what he came up on. So he do, and find a pen. So he start taggin' my city like a dumb ass.

So it's Monday, right? And fools start banging and screaming my name out, talking about, "Hey Jacob! Lemme get a magazine." I'm like, "Shut up, foo! Quit saying my name. So staff come down the hallway saying we on lockdown and everyone dropped a step.

So I'm heated, feel me? This my first time being a two-step so next day come around and I'm at school trying to learn something, and staff roll up and swoop me out the class. I'm like, "What I do now?" I get back to the unit and she (Staff) say, "You got fifteen seconds to tell me what you had in your room."

Now I'm thinking that they playing 'cause I already threw out the shhh, feel me? So I tell her I ain't have nothing. They talking about they found all kinds of stuff. Then they slide a shank on the table and ask if I know about it. Now I'm going off on staff, telling them I ain't had no shank. I ask them where it was, and they say, "It was in your mattress." So she tell me I'm getting new charges and I'm on a forty-eight.

Well, yeah they did me in. Few words of advice: check every corner for that contraband. Well I'm just waiting to see if that charge goes through. Let it be known it wasn't mine, on the one. A'ight, then.

-Jacob Da Jewler, San Mateo

From The Beat: Damn, homie, that's scandalous! It's a shame how much power the system has over you. If they say you did it, then you did it. The system shouldn't operate like that, but it does, so all we can do is accommodate to survive. What lesson did you learn from this brutally unfortunate experience? If you could explain yourself to the staff that said they found that in your room, what would you say? We wish we could make everything better, but all we can do is wish it. The rest is up to you.

Few words of advice: check every corner for that contraband... Let it be known it wasn't mine...

Trying To Keep Up

You can run but you can't hide

Once you start you're in for a hell of a ride

Sometimes wish I could have jumped of a roof and casually glide

I got caught up, could not run for long

My life was all about hitting a bong

I did not even realize what I was doing was wrong

Now I have caught myself in a lie

Everyone I think that knows about my past wants me to fry

I'm gonna stop running from the truth some time before I die

-The Hulk, San Mateo

From The Beat: You're too hard on yourself, Hulk. It is very clear to us that you have already decided to stop running from the truth — and in that decision, you have probably greatly postponed that date we all have with death. We see you on a path, and while no one can predict where that path will ultimately lead, we think the hardest part is simply making the decision you've already made, which is to choose to walk it. We hope we have the pleasure of reading pieces from you in the future that tell us about the highlights (and low lights) of your travels.

But It Always Lies

A stream of blood runs from my eyes.

My mind talks to me but it always lies.

My life stops in the sands of time.

Death makes my future defined.

Wisdom floats on the winds of a storm.

My body and soul are always torn.

Water flows like blood on a scare.

Rain falls from dark clouds of air.

Thoughts disappear among the stars.

Another day gone as I sniff the shards.

I travel from place to place.

I am on an unknown chase.

I slip through the cracks in the walls.

I flow through life like waterfalls.

-Jesse, Santa Cruz

From The Beat: If your mind always lies, teach it some manners. But it sure is a good line. We like your extended use of water imagery. Keep writing. Life just might turn you into a poet.

Child's Life

Close my eyes.

Let my whole life pass by me.

Spent, so much time.

Waiting, asking why.

I watch these kids.

They look so peaceful in their beds.

Their simple lives.

I wish I could live it twice.

It all disappeared.

I lived it with no fear.

I lost it all.

And now I'm sitting behind these walls.

-Jesse, Santa Cruz

From The Beat: Sitting behind walls and learning how to write poetry. Learning well, too. Do you think you could ever get back what you lost?

Runnin' From Da Truth

Man, I done ran from the God's honest truth when my daughter was born. I was really just runnin' doin' everything in my power to dodge her phone calls and just plain get away from my problems.

But when I got locked up, me and my mom made a side bet for me to get blood tested. Well, to make a long story short, it turns out I'm the father of the child. So I really take my responsibility seriously even though I'm locked up. I do my best, but this is depressin' so I'm goin I'll holla at you. Be easy.

-Cudabeez B5, SF/YGC

From The Beat: Thank you for writing on topic, Cudabeez. This is a fine example of running from the truth — and an equally fine example of accepting the truth when it's put in your face. The only question is what you plan to do when you get out of this situation to take care of your little baby, meaning what you plan to do to avoid coming back to jail.

Please Help Me

Running away from the truth
without a clue,
not even knowing if I keep doing the things I'm
doing
Mom gone give me the boot
Shhh might even shoot, nah!
But I have to try to face it
and battle it and split it wide open
To become one with my family
is what I'm hoping,
and to let my family know
that I love them more than life itself
I'm like a wrestler
hella felonies under my belt,
unlike normal kids at Great America on the ride
"Stealth." The truth is that I need help
or else
I'll melt
and never make it.
It's time to face the truth for my family
and most of all for me
so I won't have shackles on my feet
thinking in defeat
asking God please let me make it.
I'm on my knees asking for forgiveness
and God is my witness
So please help me.

-Ju Nut, San Mateo

From The Beat: From what we've read in your piece, it doesn't seem like you're running from the truth. But instead, you're facing the truth head on. You seem to have realized how important your family is to you. Did you display this appreciation for your family when you were out and about? How has being incarcerated assisted you in becoming grateful for your family? Will it remain this way when you are released? How do you know?

What's Your Problem

Why do you steady try to talk down on my name?
Is it because I blew it, instant fame?
What's your problem?

Must you try to take me out this world,
All because I stole your girl?
What's your problem?

Is there a reason why you talk to me like I'ma kid?
Is it because of the thing I did?
What's your problem?

I'm tryin' to live my life without struggles or strife,
But I can tell you hate your life.
What's your problem?

I tried to help you work things out,
So now I ask:
What's your freakin' problem?

-Youn 1, San Mateo

From The Beat: It seems like this person has made himself your problem, or else you wouldn't feel such emotion towards him. Have you figured out a way to solve his problem? Or does it even matter? Where do you go from here?

Catfish

"What's up?"

I just wanted to say that my problem is I'm tired of being in here. I'm tired of being bossed around by the staff. I'm tired of waking up in the morning at 5:30 or 6:00 am to take a shower.

I'm tired of everything in the system. I just want to hurry up and leave. I just want to spend time with my two kids. I got a son and a daughter. I haven't been there since they were born. I want to be right by their sides all day, every day.

I'm supposed to be a good father to my kids. I'm supposed to take care of my responsibility, but I'm locked-up in the system procrastinating.

I don't want to be like my father 'cause he wasn't even there when I needed him. Now that I'm a grown man, he wants to come back in my life. Well, to tell you the truth, I ain't going to let him 'cause he wasn't man enough to take care of his responsibility. He denied me sayin' I wasn't his son and he would never claim me.

It's all good 'cause I'm a grown man now. I know what I'm going to do when I "touch-down." I'm takin' care of my kids. Forget my pops; he's a sucka. He ain't a man, he's a catfish.

-JayBaby B4, SF/YGC

From The Beat: We can't imagine being in here as long as you've been here without feeling the same — sick of everything. At the same time, you should be able to use this feeling when you get out of here by not giving into temptations that will certainly come your way, so that you won't have to repeat this terrible experience. Not only, but you will be able to be the father to your children that your father never was to you. Go for it!

Runnin' From The Truth

Running down the street 'cause it can't catch me
Hit the corner, make a left past that tree
Speeding down the street quickly on my feet
Winded and out of breath losin' my speed
So I jump in a car, tank on half-E
High speed chase in the intersection
Runnin' just 'cause I don't want to learn a lesson
Tank on "E" and I jump out
Hit the cement and fall down
Can't stand up, somethin' has me held to the floor
Can't get up, can't barely breathe any more
The truth got me, has me in a choke hold
Truth finally caught up with me, at 17 years old.

-Peanut Head, San Mateo

From The Beat: You have real talents, PH. One talent, clearly, is that you can write. You use words creatively and effectively, and that talent can take you far. But at the same time, you have another talent, which is to skate around the edges of the topic, to hint at things without taking them on directly. For example, what is the truth that finally caught up with you?

**I got a son and a
daughter. I haven't
been there since they
were born.**

I'm A Man

My problem is people hatin' on me,
talking about I'm nothing but an adolescent that needs help.
Don't you understand I'm just a man focused on something
else? Black robes is all I've seen for this year.

2004 hasn't been clear.

Locked up and they ain't letting me out
because they fear my so-called outta control ways.
I'm a delinquent stuck in a judicial maze.

Clouds fog my mind.

At least it isn't marijuana, just past times
that had me trippin' on an invisible rope
that had me falling in a never-ending black hole
which I could always hear laughter.

Now all of a sudden hands captured me
I'm in the movie labyrinth of just a lonely fantasy
controlled by the system

because now they all pull strings, parole or probation
courts are festering upon my backside, I'm feelin' stir crazy

I just wanna ride out to a paradise full of love, no hate
but I can't imagine a world where jealousy doesn't partake.

My problem actually is me

a compulsive tendency to follow the streets
I always would run, glide upon my feet,
but now there ain't nowhere to go

Fences surround me, issues hound me.

But now I'm not drowin' in a pool of problems.

(Dedicated to wife Dennise)

-Youngster B5, SF/YGC

From The Beat: You know, Youngster, you leave a couple of details out of this life history which might make people think of you as a trouble adolescent, and not a fully grown man ready to face reality. Your compulsive tendency to follow the streets was accompanied by other compulsive tendencies, was it not? We have looked into your eyes when they were crystal clear, revealing your keen intelligence. But we have seen your eyes at other times cloudy and dim, a sign of self-destruction. So if you're a man "focused on something else," what is that you're focused on, and is it the focus of a man or a boy? Maybe it's just a matter of definitions. What's yours for a man?

One Last Time

If I could take a trip back in time

I would have not cut schools

I would have spent my money on one less dime

And would have followed all the rules

If I did things illegally, I would have kept them to myself

My friends would have been a lot more exciting

I would have kept all my belongings on one single shelf

So I wouldn't get confused and have to be memorizing

I would have had better relationships

Stayed straight once in a blue moon

Thought about others before throwing my fits

I would have forced myself to be awake before noon

Lying and stealing would not have been a game

I would not have to hold in what I felt I did wrong

My life would not be based on fame

Three months in Juvenile wouldn't seem long

-The Hulk, San Mateo

From The Beat: The value of this regretful reminiscence is that you can use it to guide your steps into the future. You cannot change what was. "Would've," "could've," and "should've" don't change history. But history teaches lessons that help us avoid the same history in the future.

Running Now

I'm running from the truth right now. Each time I think about my case and court, I think I'm just gon go to court about my case and get out since I've been down for so long fightin' it.

I'm finna have to do some time. They not just going to let me out. I got to face that, face the truth that I got to go down and do some time and stop telling myself I'm going to beat my case and go home. I got too many felonies for that.

So that's what I'm running from, knowing I'm going to have to sit down for a minute. If I did it or not that's hard, knowing you're going to have to sit down for a few years. But I ain't gon just be wasting my time. I'm going to try to get as much schooling as I can.

-Leek B5, SF/YGC

From The Beat: We appreciate the honesty in this piece, Leek. When the truth hurts as much as this one does, it's understandable that you'd want to deny it, pretend that it isn't coming. The problem with that is that when it does come, you're even less prepared to accept and deal with it than you would have been if you'd faced it squarely. However, the most important thing you said is that you plan to get as much schooling as you can. We truly believe that education is the key to your cage, and we encourage you to take that commitment as far as you can.

Drug Economy

My problem is me being in the streets, doin' what I want to do, not listening to my parents, following my crew, hanging out with my friends, doing the same things, and coming into YGC. It's a problem 'cause I didn't get to be with my family. I gotta be in here with dudes, and I can't be out there with girls.

I always drive without a license 'cause I see my big homies doing it. They got their cars taken too. The cops take your car to the auction and sell it back to other people, and then all we do is buy another car off the street with our drug money. It's all profit money, so it's nothing.

I drive very good. I got bars behind the wheel. The police know me 'cause they know my face. I'm driving down the street in my new car. Then a police sees me, pulls me over, arrests me, takes my car, takes me to YGC, and then I get back out, sell mo' dope, and buy another car.

This has happened eleven times and now I'm endin' up at the Ranch.

It's all addictive. That's what all my patnas do out there. That's all I know. I like cars: Chevys, Hondas, Oldsmobiles, Cadillacs, a Jeep, a Toyota wagon, 2 RX 7 Mazdas, and a Ford Maverick.

I've been up here in YGC eleven times for driving without a license. I can't get a license 'cause I'm not old enough. When this started, I was about twelve. My dad taught me to drive when I was twelve. He didn't have a license either.

Now I'll be turning 18 in August. They took my license and told me I have to clear all my tickets until I'm 25. Then, I can go and get my license.

-Reuben B4, SF/YGC

From The Beat: It is the quality of your writing, the detail, that makes this a standout — not the practice of selling drugs, buying cars and driving them illegally, getting busted, losing the car, selling more drugs and buying another car. What do you think will happen when you turn 18 and get caught again? Why didn't your dad have license? Wasn't he old enough, either?

My Place

I wish I could stop doing grown people things, and stay in a child's place even though in our community it's full of crimes.

Some of us just look at what our big homies are doing, like selling drugs. That's one of the things I did, and that's the main reason why I am here now, for doing grown people things. But it's real bad for our big homies also, because they just putting their life on the line.

I learned a lot at a young age and seen a lot because some people think I'm older than what I am. I'm on top of the game and I'm smart, but really this is a wake up call for me. I'm just learning my lesson. Next time I will think before I make an action 'cause every action has a reaction. (Bye Beat)

-Lil' Lloyd B1, SF/YGC

From The Beat: Unfortunately it took a trip to The Halls to wake up. But you did wake up; some never do that. When you are out, how are you going to deal with all the things that go on in your neighborhood? Do you think you would be able to get some of your other folks that are out there to get out the game too?

**look where I'm at —
in the same spot doing
the same shhh
Still running.**

Trapped

I was trapped in some crazy shhh. My mama calling the police on me for no reason, that's not coo'. I'm sitting here trapped in a dark room with a small-ass mattress and thin-ass blankets, dressed in purple and khaki, brown sandals, somebody else's draw's and bra. I'm not feelin' that. I'm mean, that's not me. Arielle basically almost goin' to hell.

Me, molested at age 6 over and over again by daddy. That ain't coo', didn't tell my mama until I was twelve.

-Lil' Dutches GU, SF/YGC

From The Beat: We're so sorry to that you've been treated so unforgivably, Arielle. What did your mom do once you told her? Please tell us she supported you to the fullest. Have you talked to a therapist or some other trustworthy adult about this? Have you found anything that has helped you deal with the pain? What advice would you give others who have been in a similar situation?

I'm Running

I'm running from myself.
Why?

I ask myself, "For what?"

"Why am I putting myself through this stress?"

Running until I can't run no more

Crying until I can't cry no more

It's hurts me when I see my momma cry

'Cause I ran from my group home and I'm in the halls

It hurts till it can't hurt no more

And still I keep running

And look where I'm at —

in the same spot doing the same shhh

Still running.

-Toya GU, SF/YGC

From The Beat: Beautiful, honest piece, Toya. Read it over and over when you get to a place where you feel like you can't take it and just want to run. You know it's not worth it, and your life will get better when you work to solve your problems instead of avoid them.

Life

Life can be so cold, so unforgiving

We must make wise decisions

during the time that we're living

See, life is not a game

It's nothing to play with

You can't hit reset on it

when the game is out of hand, kid

Saw too many in my home fail

If they only would have listened

when the Lord called

Don't meet me at the crossroads

I'm on the other side

Life's a trip

'Cause life will make a grown man cry

I ask, "Why?"

'Cause times can be so difficult

Situation critical,

But you don't hear, though

In my life, I never had much luck

When I look back, I thank God

for what was touched

Life can bring some good

Life can also bring some bad

Mothers lose their sons

And sons who never had a dad

But life is shady

It can bring you to your knees

Life is so cold

It's cold enough to make you freeze!

-Byron Beez B4, SF/YGC

From The Beat: How much do you think that your own contributions determine whether life is cold or not, satisfying or not? There's no question that life can deal body blows that can bring us to our knees, but don't we have something to say about how long we remain there? If life is "cold enough to make you freeze" (and sometimes hot enough to make you burn), is there a way to avoid those temperature extremes?

**I wish I could stop
doing grown people
things, and stay in
a child's place...**

Doin' It Right

I know my big carnal who's doing life in San Quentin for a gang-related homicide. Wishes he could've lived that day over when he killed a rival gang member in the streets of Stockton.

It's a trip how you meet people on the ins and know you'll never be able to kick it with them and chop game on the outs, instead of at Squires on the yard of San Quentin. He put me up on a lot of game and I gotsta take heed.

I'ma do it over and do it right.

-Weasel B5, SF/YGC

From The Beat: What we like especially about this piece, Weasel, is that you realize you have it in your power to do it over, to make the changes your carnal did not make in time, and to live a full and productive life in freedom. Now, take hold of that power and use it!

A Lesson I Learned

What's up, folks? It's Lil' Tay, and I'm sitting with the 150 Crew in Alameda County Juvenile Hall after doing just one month at YGC (San Francisco Youth Guidance Center aka San Francisco Juvenile Hall) because I got caught up there. And I got caught up by not following my own rules!

My most valuable rule of all was when it came time to return to my side of the Bay after a long night of gettin' it on the other side: "Never get a ride home!" No matter what, always take public transportation, meaning BART or bus. Usually that's what I would do, and I would always make it home, too.

But this one morning was different. I called my auntie at about half past five in the morning, and she came and got me — because I told her that I had just been jacked by five-oh and I needed someone to pick me up.

I said all that just because I didn't want to catch BART or take a bus. Like Lil' Meach say, "Do anyways!" But I didn't, so now I'm paying the price for not following through with my routine.

We got all the way to Mission and Fell before I stepped on the high speed as I said, "Meachy, that look like the same police that jacked us last night. They probably want to jack us now!" I laughed and busted a u-turn. And they did exactly what I had said.

My backpack was in the trunk. Now, I didn't think they'd be searching the car, but they decided to take the car. So they searched the inside of the car and didn't find anything.

At this point, my heart was beating fast, and I'm sure everyone else's was, too. Then they asked us how to pop the trunk. All my aunt said was, "It's a button you press." But she knew like I knew, the button wouldn't pop it — and it didn't pop.

But then my dumb lil' cousin went ahead and popped it! A few minutes later, they found the gun-plates and baggies that were in my backpack — and the dope that was on me! So they laid everybody down. Then they took everybody to 850 Bryant Street, the police station, and questioned each of us.

My patna Frisco said that the gun was his. He said that knowing that he had never had a case, but it was kinda too late. My auntie had got told that her kids would be taken, and she would go down if she didn't say whose gun it was. So she said that she'd seen me with a gun on Easter. And that's it!

The girl, Jessica, also said she'd seen me and Frisco at her house with the same gun that the police had described to her, "the mack wit' the shoe string." And she said, "Yeah, it did have a shoestring." So that was strike two for me.

And the third strike was my little cousin, 'cause the police called her mom. And her mom told her to tell them whose gun it was or else get her ass beat when she came home!

Frisco stuck to the script; and so did I; and Meachy, too. But I still had the coke on me. So I was going to jail for possession, and Frisco was going for the gun — 'cause it wasn't till the DA heard the tapes that I got charged with the gun.

So we were both in court at the same time for a dope charge and a gun charge. "Crime partners" is what

they called us. In the end, he walked and I'm stuck with a possession case.

But it was an illegal search! Because once you get pulled over, and if it's not your car, you're able to grab your stuff and go. But they had made all of us stay. So my mom talked with a lawyer who said he could get the case thrown out.

But the lawyer told me that the judge would still probably stick the gun charge on me because of the tapes — unless I would plead guilty to the possession charge. So I did plead guilty to possession. And I'm actually lucky, because I don't think it was any way out of the gun charge besides how it went down.

So for y'all reading this, if you're out there doing it, do it on public transportation (and pay for the ticket if you're catching BART). That way you won't come in contact with the Elroys. And I'm so sure that you won't get caught, I'd put my life on it; so long as you are not acting suspicious or flashing any of that hot stuff.

But on the real, I'd say the best way is to get a j-o-b! Then you won't have to chance it like I did. So, learn from my experience instead of having to go through jail time and losing your freedom like me. Or should I say, losing your freedom again, because if you're reading this, you're most likely locked up.

-Lil' Tay, 150 Crew

From The Beat: You tell quite a tale, and there's something to what you have to say. But the truth is, there are no rules that will guarantee you won't get caught — except as you say, to get a job! You say you'd stake your life on your public transportation rule, and we say, that's exactly what you're doing — plus, if you keep transporting guns and drugs, you will fall, sooner or later, no matter what, because you'll slip or something unforeseen will occur or whatever. So you need to listen to your own advice about a j-o-b. Quit and go legit! Guns and dope only lead to jails, hospitals and death. Haven't you had enough of these jails yet?

The Brink of Success

Well, let me start this by saying — what's up! I hope you're all doing cool. I'm just chillin', waiting for ROP (Rites of Passage) to come and pick me up. But on the real, let me get down on this stuff.

If I could change anything in my life, let me tell you what it would be — nothing! You might ask me why I would change nothing. And I'd tell you — not all the things I have done in my life have been good, but they all helped me get to where I'm at now in my life.

I know it sounds weird — because I'm in jail! But right now I actually have a chance at success, by going to ROP. For one thing, I'll be able to finish high school, which is something I never thought would happen! They will also certify me in construction work; so I have a for-sure way to succeed in my life!

But on the real, the places I've been, the things I've done, and the things that have happened to me — they have all shaped my life to the way things stand right now. And I don't want to change. But I do want to get something better for myself. Stay up homies. We all about to get out sooner or later.

-Crazy, 150 Crew

From The Beat: One thing will need to change — your ability to make good decisions when you're out free to decide things for yourself. It's great that you'll finish high school at ROP and that you'll get certified in construction work — both those things will help you get a legitimate job with decent pay. But you'll still have to follow through in the free world: find a job, show up for work, etc., all on your own. We believe you can, and you obviously believe so, too. Props! Success is right in front of you!

Changing My Life Over

I wish I can change my life over. My life is messed up right about now. I want to change my attitude.

My attitude is rude. I'm really disrespectful. When I disrespect somebody I feel bad, because I know I don't want nobody to disrespect me, especially the people that I adore and love. I be disrespecting them, too, like my mom and my grandma.

My momma was da one who brought me in dis world, and she raised me since I was in months. But when I started drinkin' bottles,

my grandma took me and started raisin' me. Since then my grandma raised me good. She was good to me, she was always there for me, and she bought everything for me. And after all these years I be disrespectin' my grandma, and she did hella shhh for me. I be treatin' my grandma like a little girl.

But then my grandma got tired of me disrespectin' her, so then my grandma brought me back to my mom so she can raise me and deal wit' my attitude. So when my grandma brought me to my mom, I was always disrespectin' her, too. I was treatin' her like a little girl, too. But my mom will do anything for me. She was always there for me. I never listened to what she would say and I be cussin' her out. I be callin' her all kinds of names and be always followin' my friend's footprints

And my mom always telling me to follow my auntie's footprints 'cause she always going to school, listens to her parents, and graduated high school and college and had a BA and AA, plus a Master's Degree.

And I always fight with my momma when she don't do what I want her to do. But now I'm in the halls doing time, and the only person that was there for me was my momma and grandma, so right now I wanna tell y'all that I'm sorry and please forgive me.

-Lil Kiki GU, SF/YGC

From The Beat: Thanks for being so honest. What do you think makes you treat the people you say have been there for you so disrespectfully? Are you angry with them for something you're not telling them about or don't want to face? What do you think it will take for you to change? Do you think you can build a better relationship with your grandma and mom? By the way, we think you should build your own path rather than following in the footsteps of your friends or your auntie. Be yourself and treat yourself right.

**the only thing I can do now
is say sorry and beg for
forgiveness.**

Impossible

Impossible is not impossible

Impossible doesn't exist

There is nothing that's impossible

Except for impossible itself

Impossible is an opinion

Impossible is a set-up for failure

Impossible is not the truth

Impossible doesn't exist

-Teflon Don B4, SF/YGC

From The Beat: We're not sure we agree that nothing is impossible (can you swallow yourself?), but that doesn't take anything away from the positive attitude this piece expresses. With that attitude, you can do (almost) anything!

So They Arrested Me, Too

I thought the police were there for me when I heard my little brother tell me, "The police is here!" — but they were there for him!

He is only ten years old! So I had to be a smart ass when they talked to me, and I didn't obey them when they told me what to do. I stood there cussing, and the policeman asked me to move. So I was just about to move — until he pulled on me. I stopped, and then he thought I was not going to move. So they arrested me.

If I had a chance to do it over, I would not start getting smart with them or cussing at them; I would have moved when they told me to; and I would have shut my mouth — or just stayed upstairs and not said a thing.

-Joey, 150 Crew

From The Beat: You've clearly learned a lesson, but it would have been hard to stay upstairs with your little brother calling out to you! Maybe you could have told him, "Everything will be okay. Don't be scared. Call home as soon as they let you, and we'll have you back here soon. Stay calm. Do what they say. It'll be okay." But inside you'd still be screaming, "He's only ten!"

I Should Listen to Her

If I could do it over, I'd go back to the sixteenth of last month, at school, second period — and I would listen to my girlfriend! Because she had just told me to stay away from certain things that she knew were not good.

And I didn't listen — but if it was a miracle that could take me back to three weeks ago, I would not have got in the car! I would have called my mom or gone home, or even have asked my mom to take me to my girlfriend's house. Any of those choices would have put me in the right path!

Sometimes I ignore the fact that my girlfriend only wants what's best for me. I should listen to her, because when she warns me like that — she is always right!

-Raul, 150 Crew

From The Beat: This piece is so full of wisdom, if only you'd felt it when you made that bad decision! The truth is, you already know, too, what you should and shouldn't do — and when she warns you, both of you know what you need to do (and not do!). Listen to her, and listen for that warning voice in yourself, too.

I Realize

My name is Nicholas and I am 15 years old. I have been in Juvenile Hall twice. I have made a lot of mistakes in my life, but the biggest one was leaving home. It's kinda weird how you don't know what you have until it's gone.

I love my mom and my family to death, but I never thought the day would come when I would be sitting here in Juvenile Hall once again. I have done everything from stealing bubble gum, to selling crystal meth, and I am now suffering for my mistakes. And now that I look back on what I've done, I now know that I need my mom's love to survive.

Everything that I've done has not been worth it. I have put my mom and myself through hell and the only thing I can do now is say sorry and beg for forgiveness.

-Nicholas, 150 Crew

From The Beat: A mother's love is special and it's unconditional. Love from friends comes occasionally. How can you make sure that you're not taking your family for granted? How can you make up for lost time with your mother? How can you make your future better than your past?

Do It All Over

If I could do some things over, I would do a lot of things over! I would try not to get into trouble and get caught.

I always think about how I wish I could re-do things in my life. I would especially re-do the cause of what got me up in here. The reason why I am up in here, is because I violated my probation. I was accused of sexual harassment, when that was not the full case.

I remember I got in trouble for lighting a fire. I used to be a pyro'. Anyway, I got caught for that, and I caught a felony on my record — and that's started all the trouble. To be truthful, I wish I could do my life over from when I was in eighth grade, before I started getting into trouble.

-Andrew, 150 Crew

From The Beat: We, too, wish you could do your life over from eighth grade on. But it wouldn't help if you just focused on not getting caught — you need to focus on what you do. Remember, every time you get away, it's just a set up for another day — 'cause you always eventually do get caught like a foo' and it ain't coo'.

**i couldn't control the pain
and that's the truth**

Truth: Don't Run Away

i'm running away
from the truth that came with pain
when my mother went away
i couldn't believe that she was gone
i had felt that she left me all alone
with the pain that drove me insane
that got me started in the game
of gangbanging' and not giving a what
man what went wrong
i couldn't control the pain
and that's the truth
you say that i'm running from
no — i'm running to the truth
that says that i miss you mom
i'm all alone
or so that's what i always think
but really i got
the streets and all of the homies
don't forget my blood family
and that's the truth
am i running from the truth
no — i'm running into it
'cause life is true and the truth hurts
and the truth is i'm gangbanging
till the pain goes
and even then
i don't think so

-Jj, 150 Crew

From The Beat: When you say running from pain creates more pain, that's true — a truth it hurts to run into! And while it's also true you find love from the homies, what sent them running to the street? Not the same pain as you, but some kind of pain that drives them insane, too! Gangbanging didn't start the rain in your heart, but it guarantees the rain won't stop. For your own sake, try to live a better way.

Thinking...

I'm thinking of my court and I'm wondering if they will let me out again on EM, so I can be able to be with my girlfriend, so I won't have to be able to worry about her a lot.

I also be thinking, if I do stay here I will get into lots of fights and then I will be crying because I miss my family and I need them with me 'cause without them, I'm nothing. I also need to know if they are feeling good and staying on top of the game.

I also think if I get out of here, I will change a lot and start going to school and start taking care of my mom and dad because they need me and I need them.

-Sam, 150 Crew

From The Beat: When you are released, how can you make sure that you're not taking your family and your lady for granted? How can you make up for lost time with them? How can you make sure that your future is better than your past?

My Problems

-Getting my girlfriend pregnant

-Buying pistols

-Grinding on tha block

-My temper

-Trying to be the man

The problem with my girlfriend being pregnant is I don't know what to do. I'm stuck in the middle. I've been with her for three years. I'm 15 and I'm going to be there for my baby and my baby's mama. She's due in three weeks.

As for the pistols, I'm trigger-happy. I'm quick to pull the trigger on anything that makes me mad because it could put me in a bad position, like a murder charge, doing Life.

Grinding's a problem and something that my mom's don't want me to do. She don't know what to think about me anymore. We still talk, but I'll just keep this part to myself.

My temper is quick to do something. When I get mad, I stay mad for a long period of time. This has been my problem since elementary. My temper has gotten me into a lot of fights and a lot of suspensions.

Trying to be the man, what can I say about that? Trying to sit on top of the world with money, buying cars, posting-up on the block, having little kids look up to me, asking me for 20 dollars — I give 'em some money, not 20 dollars and having all the latest fits, especially throwbacks. Trying to be the man brought in here, Juvenile Hall. That's my problem.

-Anthony, 150 Crew

From The Beat: We're glad that you're going to be a man and take responsibility for your upcoming child. It will be hard, but if you stick with it, you'll be happy with the outcome. Now, we have to let you know that if you keep toting them pistols and grinding and letting your temper take control of you, you'll be really sorry. And, your child will suffer without a father. What's really important to you — the clothes, the fits, the drug money and the pistols or the new life that you planted in this world? Who do you want to be a role model for — the kids on the block that look up to you or your unborn child?

**Trying to be the man brought
in here, Juvenile Hall.
That's my problem.**

Dear Mom and Family

I know you are wondering why I haven't called. Well, I haven't called because I was scared.

I already know that if I call, I can hold the phone three feet away from me — and I will still be able to hear your screaming! I'm sorry for what you've heard, but it's not all my fault.

But I know it was the wrong thing to do — and I did it anyway. So I will understand if you don't write me back. Well, let me just come and say it: I am in the Hall! And I deserve it.

Let me tell you one thing: when I get out, I will put myself on punishment. When I get off of that punishment, I will stay in the house all the time — and that way I won't get into any trouble.

I am writing this letter to beg for your forgiveness. Sincerely, your son, BJ.

-Bilal, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Perhaps a letter is better than a phone call, because it gives your mother a chance to cool down before she responds to your bad news. It's fine to ask for her forgiveness, but whether or not you get it, you will have to earn her trust and respect day by day — it won't happen overnight, okay?

Forget About Being Racist

I wish I can forget about being racist, because every Black brotha I used to see, I would try to prove to them I ain't scared of them.

I'm Vietnamese, and I ain't no punk. So back then, I would get into hella fights and get arrested a lot of times. It was stupid, but it was right at that time.

I seen so many punk Asians out there that's scared to get hurt, so they just give everything up. I wasn't like that. I'm still not like that.

I ain't trying to say I can take ya. I just want to stop being racist.

-Phu Quy YTEC, SF/YGC

From The Beat: You don't need to prove anything to anyone, except yourself. Knowing that you aren't one of those "punk Asians" should be enough. Could you teach some people to not be so scared, and stick up for themselves? We admire you for acknowledging your own racism toward Black brothas. Have you experienced racism in the other direction — aimed at you? Tell us about that.

No Regrets

If I could do some thing over it would be not doing drugs. Well, one thing is that I don't regret it you know, but you feel me, I just hoped I could do it over and not hit the pipe.

That pipe got me where I'm at right now. If I could do something over, it would be breaking the glass pipe. That stuff didn't get me nowhere but getting into trouble with the law, doing the crime I done, and doing the stuff I did in my high.

But that's if I could do it over.

-Do It Over YTEC, SF/YGC

From The Beat: Regret for past mistakes is only valuable if it guides you to a different future. So, now that you see where your path led — and where it might have led — what's next for you?

A Bad Choice

i wish i didn't rob the man
i should've stayed home
i guess i wanted
the money too bad
if i had the chance to do it over
i would never do it again
but now i have to suffer with the consequence
the only person i'm mad at is myself
i should've used my head
before i reacted
but i didn't
so i have to suffer
now i'm locked up
and who knows
how long i'm going to be in here
but when i get out
i'm going to take the right path
not that i'm saying i'm a bad kid
the reason why
i made a bad choice
is because i
i would never be caught
but i did

-Sean, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Every time you make a bad choice like that and get away with it, it's a set up! Because you tell yourself you'll never get caught. So you keep making bad choices until you do. From now on, don't put your freedom at risk. If you catch yourself saying, "I won't be caught;" — just stop!

What's Your Problem?

What's your problem? Everybody's problems are different and serious.

I know my problem is not listening to my people when they are trying to teach me for the good. When my mother and father would tell me not to hang around with that crowd, because they will get you in trouble. I wouldn't pay attention or listen to what they was saying, but now I look back at what got me in the trouble that I'm in, and my whole problem was not listening to my parents and family.

So one of my biggest problems is thinking that I know what I am doing but really I am not looking at the future and outcome.

So all you people out there with the same problem like me — listen to your parents and family because it is for your own good, because if they really love you, they won't tell you something that is going to hurt you or get you in trouble.

So like the old saying, do twice as much listening as you do talking. That's why God gave us two ears and only one mouth.

-Lil' Molly, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Sometimes we all make the mistake of not following the advice of our families. We know deep down that they want the best for us, but it's hard when it's our own family and we want them to have faith in us. When you are released, how can you make sure that you put forth some effort to at least try and understand where your family is coming from?

**do twice as much-listening as you do talking. That's why
God gave us two ears and only one mouth.**

Reaction Time

if i could go back to the mishap
that landed me in the back
of a police seat
i would have dropped the heat
that i tried to sneak
in the scene
instead i wasn't thinking
or using my brain
now my ass is stuck like chuck
in this place
makin' me crazy every day
from when i awake
until i lay
but it's okay
i write to pass the time
i write in the daylight
or the middle of the night
whatever suits me best
to get things off my chest
because i think back to that day
and it causes hell stress
but i'm blessed
i got family on my side
who ride with me
until i'm free
of these hard times
i stay away from the gats
i never look back
because if i get one in my hand
then the whole clip i will blast
and we can't have that
we can't be mad
we can't be sad
or everyone will laugh
so keep your head up
and think before you strike
look before you leap
and hold your tongue if you feel
that foul speech leak
what i'm tryin' to say is don't end up
in a place like this
for the rest of your days
if i could go back
i would have planned
thirty seconds before i planned
to react

-Socrates, 150 Crew

From The Beat: You write in a lyrical spirit, where wisdom, passion and truth got to be mixed with a generous scoop of musical talent for the heart to hear it! If you don't move the heart, the brain won't be challenged to even start to get real. What's the point of a truth no one can feel? But you haven't thought it through all the way 'cause gettin' caught is far from the worst that could've happened that day. Let's say you got a free pass that time and did dump your gat from the scene of the crime; you'd probably go straight back to packin' a mack, thinkin' you're all that plus a bag of gack! Oh no. Now is the time for you to make a plan, never to hold a gun in the palm of your hand — period! Find another way to make your pay — serious!

Learned From My Mistakes

I wish I could go back... all the way back when I first started grinding. I wish I never started. I just wanted some money, clothes and a car, but after I got all of that, I wanted to stop, but I needed gas money and more clothes. So in order to get that, I needed to continue doing what I didn't want to.

What made me start grinding was; I was tired of trying to get a job. Every time it seemed like no one called back. Then my mom would have to give my brothers money for school and pay bills by herself. So I figured I'll do her a favor by making my own money, so I started grinding.

I mean at first it was cool, then I got jacked the first time and stopped. Once I got out, the next day was my B-Day, so I ended up getting some money and was cool for like two weeks. Then I bought some weed and ended up getting jacked again.

When I get out I'm not going to make the same mistake. I'll probably go to Job Corps so I can stay out of trouble because we're moving back to Oakland, and I know something might happen. At first I didn't want to, but I figure if I can live here, I know Job Corps can't be that bad.

-Joe, 150 Crew

From The Beat: What kind of trade do you hope to learn at Job Corps? Where do your interests lie? If you go out there looking for a job and get rejected again, how will you deal with the rejection? Will you go back to grinding or keep looking for a job? What can you do to help your mother out?

Pain

when you get caught in the pain
with nowhere to run and no one to go to
you get scared and feel alone
but through all that you just keep praying
and saying to yourself — yes
i can make it through the pain
i will stand up once again on my own
and i know that i'm strong
and in time i can survive
when i'm afraid i hold tighter to my faith
to make it through the pain
if i fall down i tell myself don't you dare give in
and just believe that i will be happy again

-Lil' Mama Hanna, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Cling to your faith that there will be better days, and you can endure the pain. Learn lessons from the past, and you'll turn your pain to gain. But sometimes, just as you say, all you'll have is prayer and faith.

Walls Talk

Walls talk and the folks in front do too
But who am I to judge a wall talkin' fool?
Is you wrong for sayin' how you feel to a wall?
Because it don't answer back, but dreams fall.
But when you look at it, walls really talk
And the drama you bring to it faults
You're not crazy 'cause walls really talk.

RIP Ray Ray

-Boog Money, 150 Crew

From The Beat: If the walls could talk, they'd probably say, so much talent in here is wasted away. The walls would wish for you to see a brighter day and don't let your dreams go astray. Our good friend, 150 Counselor, Mr. Aikens always tells his young men that the best counselor is your cell/room, them walls.

Struggles And Strife

You ask me why I bang! And I'll let you know why I bang! I bang for what we believe in and represent, and to keep getting our respect and to keep our pride.

I started to bang when I was about 9 or 10. Just a youngster comin' up in this lifestyle that was dealt to him. You ask why don't I stop bangin'? I'll tell you now. It is the way I was brought up in this lifestyle. Everywhere around me is nothing but family (gang members). I call them family 'cause they got love for a homie. Like when I used to have nowhere to go, a homie's door was always open. Most of all my folks (brothers till the end) would always be together through thick and thin! I met my folks (brother) when I was about 8 or 9. Since then, we always stuck together. I'm too deep in it; I can't change! Ain't no removin' my tats or changin' my life 'cause if I do, what am I goin' to have? Shhh! This is my family and I don't even want to stop!

See, everyone in my 'hood is people I grew up with. In my 'hood we family. My 'hood might be labeled as a dangerous group, but we just a group of homies that grew up together! Family! Know what I mean? See, I don't bang for the fame or do it 'cause I think it's coo'. Ain't nothing coo' about it. We struggle and strive for a better day every time we get up in the morning. Like to have enough money to provide for our families and ourselves. To keep rent paid or keepin' a roof over our head.

See we (My people) go through everyday struggles, and strive for the better, but we chose not to let you see what we go through. We're just tryin' to survive in this lifestyle. So to all that hated, I'd like to give you a day in my shoes, but I can't 'cause you won't be able to. 'Cause you don't know all the struggles I've been through and I know you wouldn't last in my shoes.

I've been through a lot of shhh. From not havin' a house of my own all the time, to bein' tired from not havin' enough sleep, to big ass fights in my 'hood, to get our respect. But I never had to worry about being hungry or havin' a place to sleep 'cause I got homies that are family. Like I said, and I got my aunt! I could name a few that got love for me like my folks Charlie. He would cash me out if I asked, but I don't like to ask. But I know if I needed it, he would be there if he has it. My homie Nick too and my folks Roster, and the homie Flip, and Hoel. I got much love for all my folks, Little Joe too! You all know me and what I've been through, you know what I'm talking about?

But some fools just want to bang because they think it's coo', but it ain't. Most homies and homegirls that bang have been through what I've been through and was brought up in this lifestyle. In my 'hood it's only like six or seven little homies. We don't let fools just come in and say jump me in. Naw, it ain't like that. In my 'hood, it's people that was raised around us like the six or seven little homies — they're just like I was. We try to teach the little homies right, but see like how I was when I was young that's the way they got it, shhh messed up for them too. It's just like a lifestyle we live. So all you that ain't been through the

struggle and strife my people been through, and got a mom and dad at home, stop while you're ahead 'cause you're gonna get yourself hurt. I ain't sayin' I've been through it all, but I've been through a lot.

Well me, I know I'm never gonna stop bangin' 'cause this is my family and you don't turn your back on your family, right? Well, I just had to let you haters know what we go through. I tried to give advice to you that are just trying to bang to be coo'. But you need to stop 'cause you're gonna find yourself in a dead end road 'cause you don't know my streets like I do. And you ain't gonna get no love from my 'hood. I could see right through a lot of people and the ones that ain't been through the struggles and strife I've been through. You get no love from me.

So if your lifestyle ain't like mine or anyone else that's been through what I've been through, then just be yourself. There's one more family member that was always there through thick and thin, my Aunt Jami. Thank you for everything!

Keep your heads up! Just had to let my anger out and let you know how I feel and what I've been through! One love. There's shhh I didn't list and will not list. Feel me?

-Green Eyes, 150 Crew

From The Beat: We're not knocking your lifestyle or saying what you're doing is wrong, but where has this lifestyle taken you so far? Do you really want to be sitting in a jail cell twenty years from now for something you did as a youngster, isolated from other wards/prisoners/or family, as you live as a validated gang member in the SHU (Security Housing Unit) of PBSP or Corcoran State Prison? We can't tell you to give up gangbanging or to forget where you came from, we're just saying to be coo' and you're your head about how you want to live your life. Because remember once you're off the streets, you may be off for good. Forget Hayward, the hood, the family, because now it's all about them prison politics. Ready!? "Friends don't lead friends into danger" — an old saying. When will you feel that?

2Pac

maybe it's the thug in me
is what he always said
and i bet you want a hug from me
is what kept rolling in his head
he'd rap and flow
with feeling and affection
and always told the truth
is what caught my attention
his sexy eyes and luscious lips
put an extra twist in my hips
he cared for his ma
looked down on his dad
that ninja was never there
it's something he would never have
biggie started hatin'
tryin' to take the fame
but not from my baby
true playa remains the same
some say he shot that fat ninja in the belly
then changed his name from 2pac to mackavelli
he lived the thug life
had it tattled on his belly
he died as 2pac but lives on as mackavelli

-Lil' Jap, 150 Crew

From The Beat: The Beat Within was born when Tupac died, and he was memorialized in issue number one. But remember he said THUG LIFE means: "The hate u give little infants f—s everyone." Mackavelli was just another mask in Tupac's ever-changing game. His next album was planned to celebrate his mama's Panther days, when community service won higher praise than slanging or pimping or killing for your pay.

he died as 2pac but
lives on as mackavelli

Interference

i just been thinkin'
'bout life
and the things that
interfere with life
that seem to be true
but then fade away
feel me it disappear
and it was what
you put yo' heart in
and it brang you happiness
and now you lost again
not lost but back in
your negative state of mind
and then there's that cycle of pain again
and now it's like where do i go from here
but you realize you're where you started
it's a two-way road
one you go down
and let everything out
but you don't know how
two you just
went through
so now you confused
because you won't let things out
but every way seem to have a difficult side
so you go back to
what you know best
yourself
but then you think
'cause you not letting it out
that maybe what i put my all into
that maybe that interference wasn't ready
for your all
but what you put your all into
you thought was true
and then you take a deep breath
and you are back
it's like waking up from a dream
and then you look at it
as going through one of life's lessons
to make you stronger
to make you weaker
or to tell you it was only a test
but to succeed and make it through
is on you

-Lil' M, 150 Crew

From The Beat: In this poem, you feel your way through the twists and turns of your heart, mind and soul, as you seek to make sense of the whole of your life to this point. The past is like a dream in its confusion of thoughts, feelings and scenes, where nothing was exactly what it seemed. Until finally in the fire of your desire to be free, the lies are burned away, and from the ashes of yesterday — you awaken to see a new day.

**there's that cycle
of pain again
and now it's like where
do i go from here**

Anger

Beat let me tell you about another thing that could of change my entire life as well.

This was about my sister. She always disrespects me, so one day I was watching TV, me and her were the only ones home, and she pissed me off. When she did that, a big explosion occurred. That explosion was nothing but anger; I grabbed a knife and put it to her neck. I was going to kill her, but then couldn't see my sister crying so much, with so much fear. So, I took the knife away from her neck. I began to feel sad but I still had that anger in me, so I went out to look for someone to fight.

Thank God I did not find no one because I was going to be ferocious like a mean dog that no one loves.

Well Beat that's another thing that had something to do with anger.

-Lil' Beto, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Lil' Beto, this is not good. You need help. You need to learn how to deal with your anger in another way other than violence. You could end up in prison for life, or worse, dead. Anger isn't the enemy; the problem is how you deal with it. One thing that is good is that you are writing your true feelings down. We think you know what the problem is, now you need to figure out how to go about getting the help.

Something New

Man, I been here a long time, and my mom been coming up here every day to see me. She makes every court date, and she did everything she can do to get me home. Now I have to go with my people for two years, but as long as I am free, that's cool. But now I have to show the people that think I can't make it that I can and get them off my back, because being in here is not doing shhh for me, but messing up my teenager life.

I can be at home doing something, so now I have to show them that I am gon' be somebody and make it in life and try my best to not come back, because I am gon' be out of here for a long time. So stay up.

-J-Stub B2, SF/YGC

From The Beat: We're hoping that long time turns into forever. We're impressed with the way you've changed your attitude. How do you feel about leaving everything behind and going somewhere new? Everywhere you go, there are things going on that can get you back in the Hall, so how are you going to resist those temptations?

Why We Run...

We all run from the truth, the truth is scary, because the truth is, we are afraid. We're all afraid of accepting the truth, so, we lie.

We lie to ourselves and others, until lying becomes a part of our personality. We eventually begin to live a lie. We lie about our age we lie about where we've been what we've done. It's just so much easier than facing the truth.

The truth is we all lie. The truth is overrated, the truth lands you in jail, ruins relationships and hurts feelings, while a simple lie can save our career, relationships, or someone's feeling for that matter.

-Dominick, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Hmmm, we're not sure that we totally agree with you on this one. Ok, the truth is scary, but if you always tell the truth, then you shouldn't be afraid of it. Maybe the problem comes from people's behavior, towards their career or relationships, rather than lies or truth. A lie can create more problems. You are right though, sometimes a simple lie can save us, but most of the time it just digs us deeper into the pile of shhh that we created. What you think?

Dodging The Truth

I am not even gon' lie, I dodge the truth all the time. Like when my pops be trying to make me change my life around, it be the truth, but I run from it, because I'm so addicted to the fast life. It's hard for me to get out of it, but it's gon' have to happen one day. If I don't do it, the system will. I am gon' end this with "the truth hurt."

-Bear Weezy B2, SF/YGC

From The Beat: Instead of running from the truth, you are now speaking it. We sure hope you keep all this in mind once you're released.

Cual Es Mi Problema

Mi problema soy yo mismo porque no escucho y aunque esuche consejo no puedo seguirlos porque no me puedo controlar. Tú te puedes controlar pero ocupas ayuda, pero tú nunca la aceptas. Yo he tratado de cambiar varias veces pero nunca pude pasar el tercer paso. El primer paso fue, aceptar que no estaba haciendo bien, segundo paso fue tratar de hacerlo bien, y el tercero fue hacerlo bien.

Tus amigos son tus problemas porque sales del bote y te van con los mismos amigos y regresas aquí.

Yo he estado aquí varias veces en la juvenil de SF, dos veces en San Mateo, y he estado preso cinco en México. Por eso me vine a SF para dejar el problema, pero sólo vine a caer al bote de US y ahora estoy aquí tratando de cambiar otra vez.

From The Beat: Amigo parece que estuviste cerca de haber cumplido esos pasos. ¿Dinos por qué no los llebastes acabo? ¿Fue por tus amigos? Otra cosa, tienes que pensar bien las cosas ahora, porque esto de estar cayendo preso está muy mal. Imaginate algo terrible, que ahora que estas chico haz caido en muchas partes, imaginate cuando crezcas. Tú no quieres esa vida, tú quieres una vida mejor. Estar preso no es vida.

What's My Problem

My problem is me, myself, and I, because I don't listen, and even when I do pay attention to peoples' advice, I can't follow it because I cannot control myself. You can control yourself, but you need help, but you never accept it. I have tried to change several times, but I could not pass the third step. The first step was to accept that what I am doing is not good, the second step was to try to do good, and the third step was to actually do a good job of behaving myself.

Your friends are your problem because when you get out of jail, you go back to kick it with them, and then you end up in here again.

I have been in here, San Francisco's Juvenile Hall, several times, twice in San Mateo juvenile hall, and I've been arrested five times in Mexico. That's why I came to SF, to leave behind my problems, but I came only to find myself getting locked up in the US's jails, and now I find myself in here trying to change again.

-Anonymous B2, SF/YGC,

Open Minded

I'm locked down,

I'm losin'

What kind of life am I being schooled in?

Regrettin' my life and the things that wasn't amusin'

Wonder why I'm an American Idol

like Ruben

Locked up,

this life is never soothin'

Worried 'bout the females on the outs

that be choosin'

I'm open minded, but I'm losin'

but I must be a fool then

'Cause I'm locked up

with the county ready to move in

An open-minded brother,

so I must be a fool then

RIP Ray-Ray

-Boog Money, 150 Crew

From The Beat: With every win, someone must fail, what can you do to prevail? Even though you're in jail, doesn't mean you've failed. It just means you've made a mistake, but you're still young in this life. You still have the chance to make it right!

Lo Quisiera Hacer

Lo que quisiera volver a hacer es regresar el tiempo para volver a recuperar lo que perdí. Perdí muchas cosas en la vida las cuales quisiera volver a recuperar.

Perdí la oportunidad de compartir muchas cosas con mi padre. Preferí a mis amigos, las parrandas, las emporacheras, perdí mucho tiempo por las cuales pude compartir con mi hermana, y mi madre.

En mi transtorno de mi viaje a EEUU comprendí que el amor de la madre y la compañía de un hermano eran más felices que el cariño de mis amigos. Vine a los EEUU para encontrarme con mi padre y recuperar el tiempo perdido, pero terminé encerrado sin poder llegar donde mi padre, por el motivo que me agarro la migra en el camino.

From The Beat: Nos da mucho gusto que te hayas dado cuenta que es lo que más vale en esta vida. La verdad es que estabas ciego porque no haber visto esto antes tal vez no estuvieras en esta situación. Sabes lo que no estamos de acuerdo, es que digas que todo es tarde, no es tarde. Todavía tienes tu vida para que le hagas sentir a tu familia que puedes, que los quieres. Entiendes amigo, o sea que nunca es tarde, este es nuestro consejo.

What I Wish To Do

What I would like to do is turn back the hands of time so I could recover everything that I have lost. I've lost a lot of things in my life that I would like to recover.

I lost the opportunity to share many things and experiences with my father. I chose my friends, partying, and getting drunk over my father, and I lost a lot of time that I could have used to share with my sister and my mother.

During my unpleasant journey to the US, I realized that the love of a mother and the companionship of a brother is more pleasant than the affection of my friends. I came to the US so I could reunite myself with my dad and make up for the lost time, but I ended up getting locked up, so I did not have the opportunity to reunite myself with my father because I got apprehended by INS (Immigration and Naturalization Services) during my journey.

-Rene, Marin

Cosas De La Vida

Como estan todos ustedes que leen el Beat Within? Espero que esten bien y que puedan salir pronto. A mí me regresaron al B4 cuando antes estaba en el B5. Dos de mis homies salieron la semana pasada y ya estan con sus familiares.

El día que ellos salieron, yo me puse feliz por ellos porque ellos no hicieron nada malo, tan sólo estaban aquí por una confusión.

Yo todavía no voy a salir porque creo que saldré en dos años y un par de meses, pero no me aguito. Ustedes saben que yo estoy down por mi barrio, pero muchas veces me pongo a pensar que dos años y unos meses es bastante tiempo. A veces me pregunto, "que voy a ser cuando salga? Van a terminar todos mis homies aquí? ¿Por qué a muchos de mis homies los han matado y otra parte estan haciendo vida en cárcel? ¿Por qué hay un montón de homies nuevos?" Yo tengo ocho meses de no ir a mi barrio.

Fuí dos veces nomas y fue ahí cuando decidi correr del programa en el que estaba. De todos los vatos que miré, la mayoría eran nuevos y eso que sólo he estado ausente por ocho meses.

Ahora me pongo a pensar donde van a estar mis homies durante el tiempo que voy a hacer. Me pregunto si los voy a volver a ver. Espero que cuando salga ellos se encuentren bien y que nada les pase. Yo siempre reso por mis homies. Espero que todos ustedes salgan pronto y que puedan estar con sus familias. Estas son las palabras de este vato.

From The Beat: Amigo, se nota que te preocupas mucho por tus familias cuando deberias estar preocupando por las personas que si te quieren de verdad. ¿Qué vas a ganar si tus homies terminan mal o bien? Si ellos terminan bien, ni te voltearán a ver, y si terminan mal ni lo veras ni te verán. También te queremos dar nuestras palabras para que tenga fe en que todo saldrá bien, que todo marchará bien. Haz tu tiempo y toma este tiempo para penar en aquellos que si se merecen tu atención.

Things Of Life

How is everyone who reads The Beat Within doing? I hope that you are doing well and that hopefully you will be getting out soon. I was sent back to B4 from B5. Two of homies got released last week and they're already with their families.

On the day they got released, I was happy for them because they did nothing wrong. They were only in here because of a mix-up.

I'm still not going to be getting released anytime soon because I believe that I will be getting out in two years and a few months, but I don't let that get me down. You already know that I am down for my 'hood, but many times I stop and think to myself that two years and a few months is a whole lot time to be doing. At times I ask myself, "What am I going to do when I get out? Are all my homies going to end up in here, too? How come so many of homies have been murdered or are serving life in prison? How come there are so many new homies on the block?"

Eight months have passed since the last time I was on the block. I was on the block for just two months and that's where I decided to run away to from the program I was in. Of all the homies that I saw, the majority of them were new, and that surprised me because I had only been away from the block for eight months.

Now I stop and think about where my homies are going to be while I'm doing time. I ask myself if I'm ever going to see them again. I hope that when I get out, they find themselves doing well and that nothing happens to them during the time that I am locked up. I always pray for my homies. I hope that everyone locked up in here gets out soon so that you can be with your families. These are the words from this thug.

-Popeye B4, SF/YGC

Me Estoy Corriendo De La Pobreza

A mí no me gusta estar corriendo de mis problemas porque me gusta enfrentarlos. Quisiera estar libre porque si me deportan a Ecuador, no se lo que haría con los 7000 dolares que debo.

Lo que si me estoy corriendo es de la pobreza porque he soportado tantos años viviendo en la pobreza, y he aceptado vivir trastornado en la pobreza sin tener que comer con mis hermanos.

Lo que le agradezco a Dios es que aunque me he metido en problemas en líos, no he llegado tan bajo como a robar ni a matar. Pero así es la vida de injusta la cual me tiene aquí encerrado.

Este día he llamado a Ecuador y me dijeron que mi hermana estaba enferma, que tenía que operarse y me dolió escuchar esto porque me encuentro encerrado sin poder ayudarle.

Soy muy pobre y es por eso que me vine a este país. No vine aquí para algo malo. Quisiera que alguien me ayude a salir de mi pobreza, quedandome aquí para trabajar.

From The Beat: Te deseamos la mejor de nuestras suertes para que puedas pagar todo ese dinero que debes. Queremos decirte que pase lo que pase, que tenga fe en Dios, que él te guiará en tu camino y en tu destino. El sabe lo que hace, por algún motivo estamos en esta tierra. Sabemos que la pobreza es muy dura. Es bueno tener voluntad para tener cosas que uno quiere en la vida, pero es malo la abundancia, tratar de tener más de la cuenta. También nos sentimos super orgulloso de ti, por ser un muchacho bueno, que aunque hayas tenido tentaciones, nunca hicistes nada malo. Sigue así que la vida te premiará.

I'm Running From Poverty

I don't like to run from my problems because I like to confront them. I would like to be free because if I were to get deported to Ecuador, I don't know where I would get the 7,000 dollars that I owe.

What I am running away from is poverty, because I have put up with living in poverty for way too many years and I have accepted living uncomfortably in poverty without having anything to eat with my brothers.

What I am grateful to God for is that even though I have embroiled myself in problems, I have not lowered myself to robbery or murder. But that's how unjust the life is that has me in here, locked up.

Today I called Ecuador and they told me that my sister is sick and that she needed an operation, and it hurt me to hear those words because I find myself incarcerated, unable to do a damn thing to help her out.

I am very poor and that's why I came to this country. I did not come to this country for something bad. I would like for someone to help me get out of poverty and to help me stay in the US so I can work to make money and send some to my family back home.

-Manuel, Marin

Cada Vez Que Llamo A Mi Madre

Todos los días me siento deprimido por no estar con mi familia. Cada vez que llamo a mi madre por teléfono es como si estuviera diciendole adios por última vez aunque sé que algún día sejaré de llamarle por telefono para estar con ella frente a frente.

La primera vez que usé el teléfono en sef-detention fue para hablar con mi madre. Le dije que la amaba y que la extrañaba como ahorita la extraño y ella empezó a llorar. Nunca me había dado cuenta de todo el amor que una madre puede sentir por su hijo. Ahora sé que nunca debí mentirle a mi madrecita porque ella no se merecía el daño que le causé con mis mentiras.

Ahora soy diferente y pienso desfraudar a mi madre y es por eso les pido a todos los homies del Beat leedores que no hagan las mismas cosas que yo hice. Lebanten la cabeza cuando lo necesiten, no lebanten la cabeza con una madre porque no es lo correcto.

From The Beat: Que Linda escritura, que lindos consejos. Que bien que te hayas dado cuenta que tu madre es lo que más deberíamos de estimar. Fue muy bonito de tu parte haberle dicho todas estas palabras bonitas a ella. La verdad es uqe ella se merece muchisima cosas más, muchos aprecio y muchos cambios de ti. Esperamos que todos los que escuchen esto sepan apreciar las palabras que dijistes porque la verdad es que nosotros que no estamos preso las entendemos ahora ellos que estan preso. Gracias por tus palabras

Every Time I Call My Mother

I feel depressed every day for not being with my family. Every time I call my mother by phone, it's as if I was saying my last goodbye to her, even knowing that someday I'll stop calling her to be with her.

The first time I made a call in SEF-Detention was to call my mother. I told her that I love her and I miss her like I am missing her at this moment, and she cried. I've never realized before how big the love is that a mother could have towards a son. Now I've realized I should have never lied to my mother, because she didn't deserve the pain I caused her due to my lies.

Now I am different and I'm thinking of enjoying life with my mother. This is why I am asking The Beat Within readers not to do the same things I did. Keep your head up when you need it high, not when responding back to your mother, because that is not right.

-Victor, Maricopa/Arizona

**I left my house
when I turned
fifteen, thinking
I could make it**

W'hat It Will Be Like

If I could be bad as I wanna be
Haters couldn't even be mad, they'd just honor D
Sold out shows, bankroll bunch of wannabes
Backstage women pay for passes, 'cause they wanna peep
Garage full of old schools
Lamborghini, maybe a Hummer Jeep
Private jets over the spot ain't gotta run the streets
Mayor gave me a key to the city, 'cause I run the streets
Never gotta pay fo' a room, mainly I own the suites
On my yacht wit' a flock of females
Dancin' 'cause they jock the beat
Lab on the boat, 'cause I can't stop the heat
Buy up hella real estate
Each state ain't no stoppin' me
Feds still watchin' me
Waitin' fo' Yung D to slip up
But they can't stop ah G
Probably get me lit up like JF Kennedy
But no, 'cause it was meant fo' D
Laugh even when they blast
After it indent my T
100 Gs, no questions ask'd if you want me to spit a V
Double E Money sign after the second D

-Dolla Deesa, 150 Crew

From The Beat: You sound like you got all the bling-bling, Dolla Deesa, but how will you earn all this? Hopefully through your mental talents and not a hustle. What could you do that's legal to get paid before you get huge on the music scene? It takes time and patience. Find out how others did it. You got talent but all successful people had a plan B in the mean time. We can see you working with young people or as a big time salesman. Education is the key and it's free (with financial aide). The two to four+ years spent educating yourself will pay off for decades after. Look forward to the long run, not the short run immediate but temporary satisfaction.

Blind

My problem is not ever realizing what I have until it's gone.

I left my house when I turned fifteen, thinking I could make it. I left to be with my boyfriend. I've lived in about four different areas, in about three months and now I realize how ignorant I was being.

My boyfriend and I are still seeing each other because of course I love him. I keep telling myself that in order to go through all this with him I must have to love him. Astoundingly, he has the same feeling towards me.

Every night here, I stay awake staring at my ceiling just thinking about every mistake I made. How my mom must feel, the rest of the family. I went from Santa Clara to Campbell, to Santa Cruz to Newark.

All my adventures have been exciting, and in a strange way, I regret none of them. However, the things I do regret are the choices I made in order to go on these glorious adventures. I have learned something from my experience though. I've learned that you can have a great time without risking your wellbeing. The only thing you have to work on is figuring out how you can make that work for you.

I wanna say, "I love you" to my first and true love, Nate! Hopefully we'll both be home before this comes out.

-Crystal, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Crystal, what does that mean that you can have a great time without risking your wellbeing? It's very productive to spend your time in the Hall reflecting about your choices. Do you think this is going to be your last time in the Hall? If you don't want to come back, what do you need to do? You obviously need to change something, right? We have faith you can make the right decisions when your chance comes your way

If Only I Could Go Back — The Reasons Why

If only I could go back to the dreadful night that my crime was committed, it wasn't even supposed to happen the way it did.

If only I would have stayed home with my future wife, I wouldn't be in this stressful-ass place. I would actually be able to be home with my ten-month-old daughter, playing with her, putting a smile on her face. Now the only time I could see her or put a smile on her face is on visiting days and that's only for about three hours long, and that shhh ain't long enough. I really need to be home, so I could spend as much time as I want to with her.

Now I'm caught up in the system, dong some time. How much time? I don't know yet. I go to court on Thursday, June 3rd. Hopefully they don't give me hella time and they give me another chance so I can prove to them that I'm not a bad person.

Well, I have to go. I just want to say, "I love you, Gabriella and Maressa."

-Matt, 150 Crew

From The Beat: You are not a bad person at all, but you may have done bad things. What motivated you to do the wrong thing even though you had a family? Including your family, what else motivates you to do the right thing? We hope you will be given a chance too. Don't rely on just your self and willpower to do the right thing. In the beginning, find a program to help keep you on the right track. It may mean spending afternoons without your daughter and lady but in the long run it will keep you free for the rest of your life.

My Life Is My Problem

So you want to know about my problems

Well, my life's my problem

Everything that I do is wrong

I don't know why, but that's the way my life is

It seems like everything I do is messed up

I don't listen to no one

That's a problem

Doing the things I done from kindergarten

To the ninth grade has been a problem for me

Every time I went to school,

It seemed I would get suspended for fighting

Doing stupid shhh like peeing in a bottle

And giving it to someone to drink

That's a problem

Smoking weed is another problem for me

Once I start smoking, I can't stop

Then after I smoke, I want to drink

When I drink; I get really messed up

And want to do something really stupid

Coming to jail from the first time is a problem

'Cause I keep coming back

It's like I'm stuck in the system

That's all I got to say

-Lil' Augie, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Thanks for telling us about the problems you've caused. If you don't listen to anyone, maybe you should start listening to your heart. Sometimes the best advice comes from your self. So, what can you do to stop yourself from doing something that will be a problem? If you have a smoking and drinking problem, have you thought about getting some help with it? Why do you think you smoke and drink so much in the first place? It will be hard to make changes since it's been so many years thinking and doing the same things but if a behavior can be learned, it can be unlearned and you can learn something new. It's up to you.

Seventeen Years Old, With Four Kids

I wish I could do my whole life over because being in juvenile is not what I thought I will be doing right now. Sometimes I wake up and I just sit on my bed and think on how I could have been in school doing something else with my life, beside being in a room, stressin' and thinkin' about going home.

See, it's hard when you have four kids at the age of seventeen and now you have to go out and find a job. But, me, I made the wrong choice by going out and selling dope at the age of twelve, and I got locked up, so then I stopped selling dope and started robbing people.

Then I went back to jail, but now that I have four kids, and I go out looking for a job and nobody wants to hire me because of my background. Now I wish I could go back in my life and do it all over again because if I would have known all this would be happenin' to me, I would have never started doing anything that I'm doing now. So if I can get to somebody else's kids to stop doing whatever you are doing, I'm out. Be cool.

-C-Money, 150 Crew

From The Beat: It sounds like you really need to establish trust into a prospective employer, C-Money. Why don't you suggest to anyone who is reluctant to hire you because of your record, that he offer you a trial period, of, say, three months, so you can prove that you're trustworthy and reliable? There are also organizations that will help place once incarcerated individuals like the Northern California Service League and you can ask The Beat for some more leads. It's not too late.

it's hard when you have
four kids at the age of
seventeen and now you
have to go out
and find a job.

The Ghetto Curse (RAP)

You say you want to be thug

On the corner slangin' drugs

Was it the lack of love?

Now you want to fill a brother with slugs

Just 'cause you packing a gat

Doesn't mean you got it like that

Live by the gun, die by the gun

That is a fact

Getting yo' head pumped up off a rap

Then you go out there and get smoked like a joint

Now let me get to the point

If you continue the ghetto curse

You might just end up in a hearse

-Baby Cup Cake, 150 crew

From The Beat: When will this "Ghetto Curse" stop? Why do you think people behave this way? Was it lack of love? Do you think it is human nature to want to be a thug, an outlaw? Where do we get these ideas? How will it stop, what do you think it will take?

Don't Do Shhh To Impress!

I remember my first time when I got in trouble by the police, they pulled me over for fighting. I was eight years old. They took me home and gave the report to my pops and told him the situation, then, after when the pigs left my house, my dad called me and at first I thought he was gonna beat my ass, because he's a drunk and he likes to smoke. But he was hella cool, 'cause he just got a pound of some shhh, so he was happy.

Then he told me, "Chris, I ain't gonna yell at you," 'cause he was a youngsta, too. He knew how it is to be lil', but "What was your reason to fight?"

Then I told him, "I was trying to impress a female."

Then he was like, "What the hell? Never prove yourself to nobody at all. If they don't like you for who you are, well, forget 'em." So I learned not to prove myself for anyone, but I messed up again. I tried to impress myself to other people, that's why I'm here now.

-Lil' Chris, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Great advice from your pops. It must be hard in some ways to see your dad drunk and high. How is it for your mom? Is there a difference between impressing someone and living up to your potential like doing well at a job or helping your fam. out? We really hope that you will think about the people you were trying to impress last time. Do they care about your future, health and happiness? Are they worth your freedom?

**You ask me to play a game
But there's something
you should know
We're stuck in
the middle of one**

Crystal

Fast is how I used to go
Inhale the smoke from melting snow
Get high off the crystal
Turn the pipe ten to two
Billowing clouds, you feel brand new
Tastes like shards of heaven
Clouds a cottony white
Every time I take a hit I know
I won't sleep tonight
You ask me to play a game
But there's something you should know
We're stuck in the middle of one
Each move is a cloud we blow.
We started something we can't finish
A twisted game of the love and hate.
I wish I knew when I hit that piece
This would be my fate.

-Candace, 150 Crew

From The Beat: This piece has a nice flow; you are a beautiful writer, but what a tragic scenario. Drugs ain't nothing nice. Do you feel like this is your fate? What do you think leads people to taking these kinds of drugs? How can we prevent more and more folks from getting hooked? Is there hope out there? Does it have to be your fate? Do you have any control over your future? Take charge of your life!

My Problems

My problems is that I wanted to grow up too fast. Right after I turned fourteen, my mom moved me and my little sister down to Phoenix, (Arizona) with her and her boyfriend. Once we got there I got swallowed up in the city life.

I started doing crystal and skipping school. I would go to "kick back" with all the wrong people. In the beginning I moved back to Idaho for a few months and then I ended back in Phoenix. This time, it was pretty much the same thing, when it came to going to school and drugs. Only this time I stayed away from the wrong people.

I met some people and started making money, selling my body. I started doing that in December 2003. I was arrested three times for prostitution.

Once in LA before, I got caught up. I went to jail in Phoenix for a month, and then I was let out on home supervision at the end of March. It only lasted a week on that. The next thing I knew I was out on the track getting that money again. I was arrested May 18th.

Since then, I have been up here in the cell. I will be sent to Phoenix tomorrow to deal with my charges down there. Now my mom doesn't trust me to go back home in Phoenix and my dad doesn't know what to think. His sixteen-year-old daughter is a prostitute and I have scared both of my parents to death. Now they don't even know who I am anymore.

What would you think if you were in they're shoes? I have a fourteen year old little sister as well, who's looking up to me. Now I have to find a way to prove to my family that I'm still normal, and that I can get over this. That's my problem.

-Jessica, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Can you get over this? The only way to prove it to them is to do it. You can't go back in time, but what you can do is, use your time wisely. Make a plan. You have a little sister that looks up to you, what kind of example do you want to set for her? Your parents don't know who you are, maybe you should introduce them to the new you. The one that wants to change, the one that wants to be a role model for your little sister. If they don't know, let them know through your words and your actions.

**★THE★
BEAT
WITHIN**

What's Your Problem?

Don't you realize you're being trapped?
Don't you realize the system isn't playing no more?
What's your problem?
Can't you see the truth?
Can't you make better decisions?
Can't you see the hard facts of this dangerous system?
What's your problem?
Why don't you listen to good advice?
Why do you have to learn the hard way?
Why is it so hard to change your life?
Why do you keep coming back to these walls?
I don't know what's your problem,
but you do, so try to change yourself?

-Abbas, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Abbas, who are you writing this to? Whatever, it's great advice. It must be frustrating being surrounded by those who don't seem to care or who have been in the hall multiple times to your one and only time. All you can do for now is work on yourself. You've mentioned how you wanted to change in past writings. How can your family help with those changes? Change can be difficult without some help. You have truly become an inspirational writer. Keep pushing the pencil, it not only helps us readers, it helps you too!

**The sun has risen
And there's no smile
on ya' face
Time has gone by
And all feelings
have been erased**

Dedicated to Tishay and Tyresha

The sun has risen
And there's no smile on ya' face
Time has gone by
And all feelings have been erased
In a heated moment all you could do was breathe
Go to your room, sit still and take it at ease
Thinking in your mind that no one really cares
Those so-called friends on the outs,
Aren't even really there
But I got a reality check for you
I know something you don't know
That me, myself and I care more than moon glows
Everyday I wish time could be erased
That me, Tishay and Tyresha were dancing
in the mirror
Like we used to (to Khia, remember?)
It wasn't that long ago only in June, July, August,
and September
I miss y'all so much; I just wish y'all could see
Tishay and Tyresha, God bless and love from D
I love you

-D-Janai, 150 Crew

From The Beat: This is a really sweet piece to your friends. It's nice when you have friends that care so much about you. Sometimes we really take for granted the times we spend with loved ones. We only acknowledge them once they gone. Y'all will be reunited soon.

Abbas' And D-Janai's Page

Drugs Made My Life Feel Like A Dream

I used to run away from a lot of my problems by using drugs to confuse me and make my life feel like a dream. I've run from the most serious problems to very little problems. Being incarcerated has helped me realize running from your problems doesn't solve anything and can only make a situation worse.

I used to run from my problem of being addicted to drugs. I would lie to myself, saying I could quit whenever I wanted to, but I couldn't, without help. The truth actually made me smoke more, and I kept thinking I wasn't addicted. I ran from the truth, because it hurt me to admit that I was addicted and didn't know how to stop.

Finally, with Allah's help and my family's support, I'm no longer blinded by my addiction. Now my soul is free!

-Abbas, 150 Crew

From The Beat: You sound like you've left drugs way behind, Abbas. You go! What advice would you have for other youth who are struggling to stop being dependent on drugs? You are lucky to have a supportive family. Good luck!

Runnin' From The Truth...

I'm always runnin' away from the truth
I'm always throwin' my arm out for the dogs to chew
Always runnin' away from the truth
People always tell me a ninja ain't gon' care
A ninja ain't gon' love you
A ninja ain't gon' be there
All a ninja want is money and sex, and most likely
He don't even want that.
Money is what a ninja need.
I'm always runnin' from the truth.
My family always tell me, don't talk to him, he a player.
Don't talk to him, he's a thief.
Don't talk to him he just ain't right, he'll dog you.
I'm always, always runnin' from the truth.
I'm tried of talking to dudes who have no heart
I'm not gone run anymore.
(I know I'm in a place that is unstable, but if there is
someone out there with a heart get at me)
... or am I still runnin'?

-D-Janai, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Stop running! Sometimes we got to just stop everything we are doing, take a deep breath and think. Think about where you are, think about how you got here, think about what kind of decisions you make, think about what makes you happy, think about... What are you thinking about? We suggest you keep getting at The Beat and you'll find reason to better yourself.

**I'm always, always
runnin' from the truth.**

Josh And D-Moe's Page

Problems

The problems that I have are all in my head
I'm not saying that I'm crazy or that I wish I was dead
But when it's time to choose right from wrong
It's hard to go the right way like a good song
Even though I will get caught in the end
I think for today and don't look around the bend
I do what seems fun
Even when sometimes it means I have to run
These streets aren't easy and they ain't no joke
So watch what you eat or you just might choke
If I put my mind to it, I can be good
And be the kid I always knew I could.

-Josh, 150 Crew

From The Beat: What will it take for you to become the person you want to be? In the past, what made you so blind that you couldn't see? Where do you think you'll be in about five years? How can you make sure that you have a future that's bright and clear?

The
beat
within

Free

Free looks like something that I'll never have, and why?
What does it mean to be free?
I forgot what it feels like.
I can't taste it or see it.
Where do you go to be free, or does it come to you?
Will I ever be free?
It seems like not right now.
I'm hoping when they let me free,
That I will never come back here to this hellhole.
Some day I'll know what it feels like to be free.

-D-Moe, 150 Crew

From The Beat: We can feel, from your writing, your straining and yearning to be free. It's almost like you have ropes or chains around your body. You will feel free soon. Free is like fresh cold

Show me the way.
Where do I go
from here?

My Life

When I sit down and think about my life
It's like I was playing with a dangerous knife
And the judge being the knife
I wish I would have stayed home with my future wife
When I was out, I was having a good time, joking
around,
But why was I playing my life as a game?
The way I'm livin', there's no fame
To all the people I lied to and stole,
I regret it all and now I feel like I'm in a dark hole
The things I was doing just wasn't right
And now I'm paying for it every night
I'm sorry for taking life as a game
And now I shake my head in shame
There's a lot more to life than what I thought
And when I get my chance, I'm not going to sit and rot
Or else I'll just keep coming back
This is not the way to live for any human
When you could be out or barbequing
So next time when I'm tempted to do wrong
I'll stop and decide not to hit that bong
There's no reason to come back again
I just have too many friends
And there's no way I could make this my life
Especially because I have a beautiful future wife.

-Josh, 150 Crew

From The Beat: When you are released, how can you make a life for yourself where you'll be happy? What kind of changes will you be making when you hit the outs? What can you do to make sure that you will always be there for your future wife when she needs you? What kind of plans do you have for your future? Staying drug free and...?

Tyme

Tyme is all I have —
all the tyme in the world,
but I can't do anything with my tyme but sit and wait.
But what am I waiting for?
Maybe it's for that door to open and hear them say
that I can go for good
and never come back.
Some lady came and saw me, but will my PO say I can
leave?
Tyme is all I have and it gets no better, 'cause me, just
sitting here is driving me crazy.
God help me, I really need you.
Don't let me go, keep your eyes on me,
don't let me die without you.
God, you know what's in my heart.
Show me the way.
Where do I go from here?
What will be my outcome?
Lord, forgive me for all my sins,
love me and stay with me.
I'm going to sleep now, 'cause all I have is tyme.

-D-Moe, 150 Crew

From The Beat: This is a heartfelt prayer and conversation with God. You are on your way to a group home and we are so happy you were given a chance to do it easy time and then get out. So please take this as a sign from God and use it and don't abuse it! You made it, D-moe. Someday, when you have a full time job and kids at home, you'll love to have some free time! Best of luck.

Till I Stop Breathin'

I wonder why most ninjas are just feeding off what the TV tell them. Television got these ninjas thinkin' that they evil and all it's about is the money, the chains, the spinners — it's more than that. You got ninjas in Jerusalem waitin' for signs and we ain't even believin'. It's a war in the streets and a war goin' on in the Middle East and yet we don't take it seriously — it's a joke.

I won't deny it — I never really thought about coming to jail, it was always the streets to me. I'm thuggin' for life or I'm not listenin'. Forget what you talkin' about. I'm troublesome. I got ninjas that I should have been listenin' to, telling me to kill it man, — let the streets go — it's nothin'. Some ninjas livin' for the fame that comes along with the streets life. What? Wow — you get a lil' nickname. I have a lot of living to do. It's to the point now where I know what I want out of life. It's time to fess up — the streets ain't workin' out no more. Even though that's all I know, I'm learnin' more, and when you get to see more stuff you never seen or heard of — it's different. Times done changed. OG's tellin' you it's about to be real quiet when people see you out there in the streets on tha spot grindin' or whatever. They don't wanna know about you, how you is, if you well grinded, or well mannered — they don't take the time.

I was just sitting up thinkin' about life and it hit me like, — I'm so young. I didn't get to experience what most got to experience from being in the streets. From mail letters, morning wash ups and room time. The game's over, but life just started and it won't end till I stop breathin'.

-Lil' Youngin, 150 Crew

From The Beat: When did you change your state of mind? What's causing you to change your mind about the street life? When you are released, what kind of plans do you have for the future? How will you live your life differently? And, where will you turn when times get rough? Where do you see yourself five or ten years from now?

**The game's
over, but
life just
started and
it won't end
till I stop
breathin'**

Lil' Youngin's Page

Being Hard Headed

Ain't no ifs, ands, or buts about it, you make that wrong decision or mistake and you could lose your life. When all you do is get wrapped up again and again bumpin' that head fallin' and gettin' right back up.

We being told to stay on point and be game tight 'cause our life is ruff and rugged born into the streets before I could even walk, I was already getting ready for a hard life. People sayin' he gon' walk in his fathers shoes. Now even though I remember what my father told me and held on to it up until this point, it was like now my father ain't around.

When I found what happened — he's on a break — he went out of town. Naw man he in prison. I chose the streets. I was lookin' for my father and he was gone off and on so I grew up faster than most kids did, due to the lack of that father figure. I learned the hard way and when I did see him, he made it seem like I was being lazy sayin' stuff like, "Lookin' at the sun don't pay" and "If you plan on being rich or being somethin' get off yo' ass" So I took it like that, but I was back in the ghetto doin' wild shhh on a mill ticket mission.

Me, I'm thinkin' like — how you gon' tell me somethin' that you ain't doin', but you want me to do? So I was being hard headed.

-Lil' Youngin, 150 Crew

From The Beat: There's an old saying — "Do what I say, not what I do." Many adults tend not to be role models and have just the right things to say. It was probably just his way of steering you right when he couldn't show you right. What you should do is follow your heart and you won't go wrong Can you feel that?

Yet I Still Smile

When you get a knock at the door and love walks out and pain walks in — it hurts, but when that smoke clears and all the hurt, and pain, and anger, sadness you gotta be able to

smile.

Sometimes you might need a hug or some love, but it's harder on you when you avoid it. I always think to myself, will I be smothered by my own pain? No matter how hard the road might get and no matter how shady the journey might look, I still smile. See my life is full of the truth. Past decisions or messages that were passed on to me — I never listened to, but what I held on to ain't no fairytale. No such thing as clap your hands and you can go back in time — the past is the past.

To me and my patnas it was always like either I'm wit' ya or against ya. Sometimes you can't trust certain patnaz — some get money greedy. They'll smile in ya face and frown behind ya back. While most is out there tryin' to impress somebody — do it for yourselves so you can look back and say I did that. I've been through that. If you really believe — you can achieve. Most set their selves up walkin' into that hole — can't nobody hold ya hand. I fell a few times even though I had the good times and bad times — I still smile. I fell short by selling my soul for material wishes, fast cars and females, and never asked for a sense of guidance or wisdom.

Even though there have been pros and cons up and downs — I still smile.

-Lil' Youngin, 150 Crew

From The Beat: We're glad that you're still in good spirits even though you've been through hella drama. Besides smiling, what can you do to stay cool and sane? Does writing keep you level headed? What are some words of advice that you would give to someone who was facing similar battles as you've faced?

Lil' Ray And Avery Fronts' Page

Doing Nothing Over

I wouldn't do nothing over in my life. It's 'cause this whole situation just makes me stronger physically and mentally. Some people always gripe and complain about what they did and where they are goin' because of their crime, but when they were out they was actin' like the toughest person alive, but when they hit here then wanna change.

I always remain the same from when I was out and now that I'm in here. I see people complaining in the Beat about Camps, group homes and even probation or EM. I'm going straight to the Y and I ain't complained not one time. I did a certain crime to get here so I just gotta do the time. I'm takin' my time like a souljah even if I gotta max out. I've always been religious and humble and won't never change, but at the same time I gotta do what I gotta do to survive, bottom line, but way more than half of these people in here are straight suckas, they're soft!

I see the fear in people eyes, I can see right thru these people and all of them are just scared, lost little kids. You hard enough to do your crime so be hard enough to do your time. I figure God put me thru this situation for a reason, so I'ma let him do His job and see what's in store for me.

-Lil' Ray, 150 Crew

From The Beat: You sure know how to keep it real. What are you learning from being in the Hall? How do you plan to make the best of your time in the Y? What do you want to learn? How can you stay strong and show yourself love and sympathy? How does having God in your life keep you strong?

STANDOUT

Problems Of Solitude And Reality

My problem is feeling alone
Thinking about being here
and why I'm not chillin' at home

My problem is doing a bid

And judges who don't know that lost time can ruin a kid

My problem is hating the war
'cause they keep a tally of bodies

Why they should be erasing the score

My problem is seeing someone go through a struggle

Crying starts from one tear then grows to a puddle

My problem is not ahead pollution

Just situations that need a little time to come up
with a resolution

My problem is with history 'cause there are murders
That haven't been solved and today they're still
mysteries

-Avery Fronts, Virginia

From The Beat: Wow! These are some really deep problems. Your ability to look outside your own personal problems and realize your interconnectedness with the world is amazing. The same connection and care you feel for others' pain can also be used for others' happiness. How can you feel one with those who you think are not like you or are against you? Finding your commonalities, like wanting happiness, with those who you don't get along with can help you through life.

Deeper And Deeper

Come follow me back in the day, I still was thuggin', nothin' changed always into somethin'. Whatever — you name it. Young thug with my homies. It's one love. Lil' badass kids sneaky and calm collective slicksta. I may not of been on the scene, but you can believe I was in the picture. Into mischief, sellin' yayo, scrapin', car jackin', gun packin'. I'm lackin' everything you can imagine so I'm prayin' rappin' to get me up out this jam.

Damn just give me a chance, I'll keep 'em dancin' all night. When times got harder and harder, my dreams got further and further away. I chased 'em but couldn't catch 'em to save my life. So now I'm thuggin' on this corner. I'm tryin' to keep my financial status, I chance it messin' with these rollers when they roll up. Yeah, I don't wanna be locked in no cell, but I also can't take strippin's and be broke with no mail, oh yes it's hell, When they say it gets easier, but to me it only got deeper and deeper.

-Lil' Ray, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Sounds much easier to go out there and look for a job rather than creep on these mean streets. You need to check your self before you truly wreck yourself and find yourself locked up in a cell for life, wishin' you had another chance/

In My World

In my world, things seem out of reach

Alone, you are a learner with no one there to teach

In my world, people suffer from pain

No umbrella to shelter them, all covered in rain

In my world, dreams become nightmares

As soon as the sun rises it seems to become night there

In my world, there is some positive too

Like the warmth of loved ones, always bothering you

And in this world, there are a lot of cheers

So much joy fill hearts, which bring a lot of tears

In my world, I may be considered a thug

But once you get to know me,

You would want to give me a hug

Because my world is always filled with

Love

-Avery Fronts, Virginia

From The Beat: This started off with the sad reality of your world (and the rest of the world alike) but open to beauty, you welcome it with open arms. Keeping doing this. Having the courage to look within, facing the good and especially the bad, is great practice.

**My problem is seeing
someone go through
a struggle
Crying starts from one
tear then grows
to a puddle**

Young Tezz And ShoMoe's Page

I Wish

I sit in a hot room everyday
Sometimes I wish I can just get away
I escape in my mind
I travel through time
And I wish I wouldn't have committed that crime
I'm thinking about doing more with my life
But sometimes I just like to get high
When I get high, time flies by
Then, when time flies, some nights I cry
And wish I were at home with my moms
Talking with her, letting her know my feelings
But I didn't do that
I told her that I'd get back to that
I have a baby momma with a lot of drama
This is just too much krama
I'm only 15
I think I've seen too much in life
I've been shot twice
I wish that sometimes I didn't live a life
To all the youngstas
Stay up and show that you can be somebody
Don't let your friends get you in any trouble that
You know that you'll get locked up.
That's my word.
RIP Tim and Grams.

-Young Tezz, 150 Crew

From The Beat: We know it's a struggle having your child at such a young age, but remember, your baby needs you. He/she doesn't know how old you are and doesn't care. He just wants to be held and loved. What can you do to make the best of your life? How can you make a good future for yourself and your child? Remember, keep your head up!

Pink Flower

(inspired by Thuy)

the pink flower soft as a rose
with sweet juices that flow
the pink flower is the source of pleasure
the pink flower is something to treasure
when i think of the pink flower
i have to take a cold shower
just to calm the arousal in me
so i wish to be a bee
and bury myself deep inside
as i swim inside a tide
of sweet juices that feel so good
i get consumed as i should
this flower has needs though
so for this i tow
a treasure trove of nectar to support life
when this treasure is received it creates life
in a fertile vessel in the depth of the flower
nine months later it creates beauty
this is its power
it's phenomenal how all life
came from this flower
and how god bestowed such power
in a pretty pink flower
remember this
when you frolic in the flowers
just remember its power
this is the poem of the pretty pink flower

-ShoMoe, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Though your material is of an adult nature, your divine allusion and serious conclusion, transform the flowery nomenclature you employ not merely to celebrate the object of your joy and desire but also to warn of a world of responsibility into which human life is born.

Untitled Poem

You live life day by day
And night by night
I know that you want to do the right thing
All you have to do is have the right mood swing
Don't let your friends put you in a position to get
locked-up
Do the right things
I got in a high-speed with 5-0 in a stolo
I wish I would have made the right decision
But listen to your parents and do the right thing
Respect, love, honesty, and trust
Is the way I would think...
Holla!

-Young Tezz, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Nice poem. How will you avoid friends that tend to get locked up? How can you make "freedom" choices instead of "free dumb" choices? How can you make sure that you follow your heart and not your friend's footsteps?

Wouldn't Change a Thing

In my life there have been many things that have hurt me and dramatically changed my life — but I wouldn't want to change anything!

Because every single incident that I have experienced has helped make me the person I am today. All these incidents and events in my life, give me the strength to achieve my goals. Yet there are incidents that I regret happening, like when my grandma died or when I got locked up. But both of these situations, too, have made me stronger. Both of these incidents, give me the strength and determination to get my education.

Now I have accomplished the goal of earning my GED, and I have awakened and established other skills which were lying dormant deep inside. They say when life closes a door, it opens a window — and life has opened multiple windows for me!

This is the reason why I would never change or do anything in my life over again. I have learned many things on this treacherous path, and I still have many things left to learn.

I will accept whatever happens to me in life, because it becomes a part of me. What would I do over in my life? Nothing.

-ShoMoe, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Some people become obsessed with thoughts of how they would change what they did on this or that occasion, while you have found the wisdom to accept whatever happens, learn from it, and allow it to change you — for the better! That is a deep wisdom. Keep it close to you. Still, you need never purposely choose to do things the hard way; you needn't try to make mistakes to learn lessons — life has plenty of hard lessons in store without going out of your way to make it harder than it has to be. (Get clean before your addiction again gets mean!)

**Respect, love,
honesty, and trust
Is the way
I would think...**

Tishay And Gypsy George's Page

My Story About Baby Boy (Part II)

remember what i said
i'll answer the question myself
well i did
and now my feelings are as strong as his
see from when it first started
it had ended
but we agreed to start it again
i was looking into his eyes
and to my surprise
i caught a vibe
and i started to melt inside
all the time we were friends
it was love in disguise
i never thought it could get so real
but the whole time the feelings were sealed
now looking into his eyes
when i get the chills i can tell him how i feel
without hesitation it's my will
we can share our deepest secrets
and we don't mind
because we know we'll keep them clandestine
i will never compete him
with anyone
'cause they can't beat him
and i know
he'll be there and here when i need him
and that goes both ways
'cause he'll need me too
he opened my heart
so i know he'll make it through
along with my mind said it'll be fine
this baby boy is a close friend of mine
i know he'll be here when i need a shoulder to cry on
or if i need comfort when i'm alone
but with him around i don't think that can carry on
well that's it for the stories
no more parts it's time to end this
'cause from here on and on
it's our business

-Tishay, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Every story deserves a happy ending, and this sounds like one; but in truth it's just the beginning of what's to come — and there's not much better to build love on than a friendship that's already strong. Still there are no guarantees in a love song, 'cause love's what you make it as time goes along.

Doing It Over

If I can do it over again I would not rob the old dude I robbed! I would have chose better choices and not came to California. I would have stayed in Alaska. I would have thought of life and not done the shhh I did and think of what I've done.

See, I think of the person that I took and I feel for that person, and now I'm locked up thinking of what I did, talking to God, asking for forgiveness. And now I'm plotting the days for when I get out, so I can start over and do good in life. Thinking of what I came here for and what I can do to stay out because I want to do the right things in life. I know now what I did not know then.

Shout out to the Hall. Sitting in the Hall, thinking of it all not knowing at all how it will all fall. Looking at the wall sitting here praying for y'all behind the wall of the Hall.

-Gypsy George, 150 Crew

From The Beat: What are the plans that you have for the outs? They have to be solid; we know that. We hope that this attitude lasts for a long time. A lot of people say it, but don't do it. Take it one day at a time and as the days come, you can make the right decisions during those days. Remember it's what you do and the decisions you make during the day that makes your day a blessed day. You know you really have to be serious about changing and doing the right thing. How serious are you?

Do It All Over

if i could do anything over i would
be born again to make someone tell me the truth
about life and how to do everything right
'cause you can't live twice
it's like dice and craps you're out
but you always have another way to go about
and i'd bring back my grandmother
i'd take care of her for her to know that i truly love her
and again bring my ninja 'pac back
he was being too real that's why
them ninjas got hot with that
they couldn't stand him but he on the real list i still
commend him
see they gone but nobody can end them
there's so many people i'd bring back
but i can't state all the names i'd need a book for that
and mistakes that i made i can't complain
because mentally i got paid
but shhh it's sooo much that i'd change
but i'm gonna leave it as the past
but even though it's gone in my heart it still lasts
but hey i'm still here for longer
but if i ever could i'd do it over

-Tishay, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Sometimes the blessing is you get to do it over with your own kids. You get to teach them what no one taught you, and be there for them as you wish someone had been for you. And the blessing feels like this — you experience the love you missed even as you send off it off as a gift. (And Tupac was real, but got used by Death Row, you feel?)

To The Beat

They say life is love. If life is love, well where is the love? Us minors rob, steal, beat ninjas down, but we don't think of the after math. And when we need that love, we don't get it because we don't give love.

But now that we're locked up, we look for that love. Not thinking of the shhh we did to get here. We just sit and talk all that shhh about the DA saying, "Oh they don't show no love." That's 'cause us, we don't show them the real life we live, but we show the crime we did. Like me, I know what I did was wrong. Most of y'all don't even think of the other person you "did" or robbed or beat down. But when we, the new generation, have kids, what we gonna teach them?

I for one, pray everyday for all of us to do the right thing in life, so our sons and daughters may not do and see the shhh we seen! I say do right when you get out of the shhh hole "we're" in right now, and pray everyday and God will hear you! To all, God Bless and give love to receive life.

To all in the Hall, get out and stay out. Shout out to Broken Glass — you are good. You make me think about life. You should be a writer, holla back. In God we trust. Amen.

-Gypsy George, 150 Crew

From The Beat: "It is better to give than to receive" — an old saying. Sometimes when we go out there and keep trying to get more and more, we get greedy and end up losing it all. In giving, we give love. In this piece you are giving yourself to us... that is special. Thanks for sharing your point of view. Keep your head up!

Learn From The Consequences

In the past I've sinned yet I've asked for forgiveness
In the past I've given but didn't take kindness for weakness
The choices we make will decide if we prevail
I've tried my best not to wander off the beaten trail
In life many obstacles will get thrown in your face
You either find your way around or get put outta pace
These are the things that make you rich or a grave
You'll reap what you've sowed for everything you gave
Decisions of life come every single day —
Will I make the right one, will I find my way?
Although the consequences will stay stuck in your mind
You must learn from them, 'cause you can't turn back the
hands of time.

-P-nut, Virginia

From The Beat: Your poem is eloquent and filled with wisdom. You're right that you can't change the past but we can change our perception of it, hence changing it in a way. What have you learned from your past, your family's past and others?

My Problem Is Living In Hell

Trying to do this last five months in hell.
I try so hard
not to get in trouble
or a fight
but everyone pushes my buttons,
so I just avoid them
stay to my self and try to calm my nerves.
I don't know what to do any more.

-Fabian, Virginia

From The Beat: They cannot push your buttons if you don't let them. Haters in reality are feeling self-hatred and want to spread it. Feel sorry for them and don't take anything personal. Why waste your energy on them anyway? You don't need to prove yourself, Fabian. There are many ways to manage your anger. Ask your counselor for ways and try them out until you have found a method that has worked for you. Don't give up!

This Girl — She's One Of A Kind

This girl — she's one of a kind.
I try to tell everyone she's all mine
When other boys try to take my life
But she chooses one out of all the men in the world
That makes me so happy
That she's all mine
I tell you once more
This girl, she's one of a kind
I need this girl, she makes my world sane
I hope our love never ends until the end
She makes my heartbeat and my blood flow
When she holds me in her arms and kisses me through life
I see she's one of a kind
and I thank the Lord she's all mine.
I want to let you know I love you so.

-Fabian, Virginia

From The Beat: You're one of a kind too! This is a beautiful poem to your girl because we can tell you love her a whole lot. Remember love is not about owning someone. True love is wanting someone to be happy no matter what, even if it means letting her go. We wish you both luck!

P-Nut And Fabian's Page

Questions

The truth is, the truth can hurt
Life can change directions —
And leave you dead in the dirt
So until tomorrow I must survive —
Today
The bigger man is destined to —
Walk away
The past is irrelevant to what —
The future can hold
If your hatred grows your heart'll —
Turn cold
Eyes can be deceiving —
You must look at the heart
But to know where you're going —
You must know where to start
So many thoughts for just a kid
But all of these things will remain —
Stuck in his head

-P-nut, Virginia

From The Beat: We like your words of wisdom and your style. Use your own advice. Watch your thoughts and your actions will be cool. Know that your "tendencies" are habit patterns of the mind. You can break them as well as you made them. Get support and help when needed.

Accepting Christ

I'm living my life with Christ now. My family says
that's good.

-Fabian, Virginia

From The Beat: Spirituality has helped so many through their trials and tribulations. But remember you also need to get to the bottom of your issues. If you have an addiction for instance, use the church for help AND a program.

My baby girl might be leaving me.

My Girl Might Leave

My baby girl might be leaving me.
I do not know yet.
But she is my life.
I hope to see her when I get home.

-Fabian, Virginia

From The Beat: She may mean a whole lot to you, Fabian but we urge you not to make her your life. Your life belongs to you. You bring 100% and she brings 100% (=200%). We hope it works out but remember to count your blessings, keep the memories and accept change.

"Doing It Over"

That Day

If I could do it over again, I would go back to that day when I was on the block in Oakland, playing with these females, instead of paying attention, staking my grounds, watching my surroundings. When them boys came, snatching ninjas up, I was just standing there and got my silly ass woke up. But I ain't trippin', because now I got some bigger shhh to worry about.

Now, ever since then, I've been getting wrapped up and that was my first really major case, besides this one that I'm fighting right now.

To The Beat: My fingers are getting tired. From that max kid.

-Lil' Jay

From The Beat: Good writing. Push yourself to write longer next time. Maybe you were just watchin' the action and shouldn't have gotten snatched up that one day you were on the block. But, can you ask yourself—was the life you were leading on the outs going to get you wrapped up some day anyhow? Now that's a problem. How are you going to work your life around, so that you'll stop the mess that sets you up and brings you inside? It's all on you to choose the right path.

Remembering

There are times in everybody's life when they feel like they should do something over. Whether you regret doing or not something is up to you.

I remember a time, about a month and a half ago, April 21, 2004 when I made one of the biggest mistakes in my life, that could have prevented me from ever coming to the Hall, from ever writing this.

On April 20th, I went to court because I had two cases pending from previous bad choices I made earlier in life. I went to court and got it postponed for a week. I was told that I was only going to get probation for my crime, but due to me running away the Sunday before, I was in a messed up position to do wrong. I left the courtroom planning to stay out of trouble 'till my court date.

I would have, but I let my friends convince me into attempting to steal a car. I agreed to participate in the act, only putting myself in a position to get in trouble. Which put me waiting to go to Camp Sweeney for six months. That is something that is worth doing over.

-Joshua

From The Beat: Peer pressure is a hard thing to say no to, yet you had so much riding on it, your freedom! Which part do you wish you could do over? How would you handle that situation differently? Now that you are in this situation, and you can't do it over, what have you learned? Is there a way to prevent you from making bad choices?

I let my friends convince me into attempting to steal a car

I Wish...

I wish I would have gone to court and stayed in school.

-Locked up kid

From The Beat: You still young and you still got the chance to go back to school... It's never too late until it's to late!

The Day Before Easter

One thing that I wish I could've done over — I wish I had never robbed anyone to get my money!

It was the day before Easter, and you know on Easter you like to get fitted! 'Cause you and the whole turf gonna be at the Carnaval, shining and pulling females. You know how it is: you don't want to be hella dirty while your potnas be saucy, 'cause the females will walk right past you.

But besides all that, I robbed someone for some money to get my fit. Then after I took the money, I walked to the block — and the boys came and slammed me!

-Anthony

From The Beat: We understand your confusion about not wanting to look like a loser on Easter. So every time you don't get caught, you're feeling cool — but it's just a set up for when you do! So let this sad experience be a lesson to you, and don't play the fool.

I Regret

The things that I've done in my life is not so good. I've done a lot of things I do regret. Like smoking, drinking, being bad and even being in here is what I want to go back and do over.

I wish I can go back to being a little good girl, and for my parents to have trust in me again.

Being on probation is a big deal because you're not free no more. At least not as much as you were. Living this life is not good.

When looking at where I'm at, I wish I'd have listened to my parents. Back then I got mad at my parents for telling me what was wrong, and for some reason I got mad and ran away to live with my boyfriend. I was staying with my boyfriend for about two months. It was okay for a minute until I realize I was in the wrong place.

When being on your own, it's not fun. But then again, it is because you can do what you want, and then again you see you livin' under somebody else's roof that you don't even know, but only one person, which is my boyfriend and still is, which is going to be my baby daddy and hubby.

I love who I am and ain't going to stop doin' that. I look back at all the smoking I do and think, I can be driving a nice car and having a lot of money just saving up for bigger and better things, so that's all I wish I could do over.

-Eneio

From The Beat: You can love who you are and have your parents trust you at the same time, ya' think? Nothing is wrong with being on your own, and making grown-up decisions, but you need to take responsibility for your actions. Your reality is that you are locked up in juvenile hall. What do you think about that? You wanna be free? Make some grown-up decisions because you love yourself.

Doing School Over

If I could go back to a part of my life and do it over, I would go back about two years, so I can tell myself to go to school and do something with my life. But stayed kickin' it in the 'hood. And I'd do things the right way because there's always a right way and wrong way to everything that you do.

But anyways, that's the only thing I'd do over.

-Young Negro

From The Beat: You're still young therefore you still have the chance to do things over. How can you right the wrongs?

Doing Life Over

I would like to do it over. I'm talking about my life. My life has been so screwed up and I can't do anything about it until I get released.

-Anonymous

From The Beat: You can start right now by planning on what you're going to do, how you're going to change your life when you get out. Ever hear the saying, "If you fail to plan, you plan to fail?"

Do Over's

the things i would do over
the time i missed
being with snoopyy
when he died
an' all the times
i went to the hall
an' all the times
i missed my family
an' all the bad things
i done in life
what i still want to say is
to rocket
— stay up

-Droopy

From The Beat: You need to think through the good and the bad you do. We suspect you have the two so mixed that it's hard for you to put a stop to the bad, 'cause much of the so-called good brings you trouble and leaves you sad, too.

That Decision

I wish I could take back my decision I made, when I made it! Crime. 'Cause I never thought about the consequences and now that I am in Juvenile Hall, I wish I can take everything back I did, anyone I hurt and especially my family. That's what I wish I can do over again.

-Baby Cup Cake

From The Beat: Unfortunately we don't all have our own personal wish granters, but we can choose to learn from our mistakes. You can't go back in time, you can't take back what has been done, but you are in control of your future. You decide how you are going to treat people from now on, right? Don't focus on the past, focus on the future! What's your game plan upon leaving juvenile?

what I would do over again and try to change is when I did the crime

That Crime

Well, what I would do over again and try to change is when I did the crime I came in here for. And then I would change why I'm in here now, when I stopped calling my home supervisor officer. And then for my girlfriend when she told me she got sexually harassed when I was in jail. Now I'm thinking I should of have never took that lady's car key, and then I'm thinking my girlfriend would have never been sexually harassed, because of that.

And if I could go back I would change everything and when I light weight stopped calling my home supervision officer if I could do it all over again that's what I would change.

-Lonnie

From The Beat: There's no telling what you are going to miss out on, when you are in the Hall. You can't do it over again, but you can take this experience and learn from it to prevent it happening again. A good place to start would be to stop committing crimes. That way you won't be in the Hall. You can protect your girlfriend and you won't miss out on anything. What do you think? Is there another solution?

Time To Fly Right

If I could do it over, man, school, because you need that shhh so you can get by. I see it like this, Leroy. I am getting too old for this shhh out here in the streets. It is time to fly right on the real.

I just got shot and that shhh is not cool. So that is what I mean when I say it's time to fly right. And it is only one-way to do it, and that is to go back to school, Leroy.

-Yb

From The Beat: You sound like you have a real heart for school. Maybe getting shot put a shock of reality into you and you realize that you are lucky you're alive. Going back to school is a great start! How about volunteering somewhere you can meet new people or getting a part-time job to keep you busy?

What I'd Change

There are several things I'd do over in the past. There are people I would stop myself from even talking to (girls and guys alike).

I would prevent myself from making the choices that I have made that led here. I would have never started smoking, drinking, and cutting. However, since I know I can't change the past maybe I can use the choices I made in the past as learning experience I mean they must have happened for a reason...right?

-Dominick

From The Beat: Right! The best thing you can do is to learn from your experiences. So, what did you learn? How are you going to deal with your drinking, smoking and cutting problems? Don't be afraid to ask for help. It takes strength to ask someone for help. You got your mind right; now it's time to learn how to make those positive decisions.

If I Could Change

I'm in the Hall for something I didn't do. But when I get out, I'm going to stay out.

When I'm in here, I know I'm hurting my dad and mom. But I know I'm hurting my dad more, because he is sick with cancer. If I could change what I did, I would not be in here right now.

-Decoto

From The Beat: You're hurting yourself, too, being in here while your father's seriously ill. You can't change the past, but you can change what you do from here on out. Being innocent of the charge isn't enough — stay away from trouble.

Doing Nothing Over

What I wish I can do over?

I would not do none of the things that I did to get here, like taking people's things.

Next time I will just leave the people and their things alone.

-Latosha

From The Beat: That's a good idea! Maybe you could be a giver now, instead of a taker. We wish you the best.

With Hope and Faith

(for Dayna)

If I could start something over, it'd probably be my relationship with my girl. I feel like our relationship is falling apart — but at the same time, I feel like our feelings are strong.

And even though things go wrong, the love we feel for each other is keeping us together. I pray to God every day before I go to bed, "Please give me the strength to make everything better."

I know we've made mistakes, but with hope and faith — our relationship will change. We'll feel less pain and more joy in our love and in our life. I miss you Dayna.

-Lil' Will

From The Beat: Here's another prayer that might help in times of stress: "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

I know we've made mistakes, but with hope and faith — our relationship will change.

"Doing It Over"

Rappin'

I wish that I could get back in the studio and rap.

But this time I would rehearse over my lines, and pronounce my words correctly.

So when it was my time to shine,

I could come correctly and put away the mic and stage fright.

But on top of that, I would do over my school history,

because I started messin' that up when I got into high school.

I wouldn't go to school high,

talking hella shhh to my teacher and getting suspended off some bullshhh.

If I had another chance, I would not have got shot over a lick.

Where I came up, but the pills and drugs had a little ninja on one.

You can't turn back time.

-B'z Bo

From The Beat: If you got shot over a lick, you already know how close death can come. You sound like you've learned a few lessons in life. What do you like to rap about? Now that you have tons of time in your room in juvy, are you refining your raps? You still have a chance to go back to school and do it right. We know many people who were incarcerated and are in college now. You can't turn back time but you can look at the past differently and use it as knowledge.

Doing The Hall Over

I am doing the Hall all over again. I have been in here six times before — and now one more time!

Now they are talking about putting me in CYA (the California Youth Authority), but i'm not going out like that. I'm going to go to a group home and pimp that program.

All my brothers have been to the CYA — but I can't go there! So I have to come anew.

-Travis

From The Beat: They say a complete change is the hardest thing on earth to do, but it's not as hard as walking on the edge without a slip or a fall. Go to school and follow the rules.

All my brothers have been to the CYA — but I can't go there! So I have to come anew.

Do It Over and Start Off New

If I could go back and do it all over, I would change so much! Let me start by saying — I would never have ended up in Alameda County Juvenile Hall or next door here in Camp Sweeney.

But as a result of the choices I was making, I ended up in these places. I just wish I could go back to my normal life again and drop all of my bad habits like: staying out all night, drinking, and not listening.

I can tell you one thing though. When I get out of Camp, I'm gonna do everything all over! I will start off new — and live a positive life! My plan is to pick some new friends and to stay with my female who only wants what's best for me.

-Lil' June

From The Beat: It's been a hard time for you, but you've made the best of a bad situation. When you leave Camp, you'll have not only a new attitude but new tools to help you see your goals through to completion. Props.

When My Mom Died

If I could take a time in my life to do over, it would be when my mom died. I didn't know how to go through it, because I was only fourteen.

All I was doing was going out stressing and getting drunk with the homies. I turned to the game, because I felt like I had nothing left but the 'hood. But now I realize that I got family, like my dad and sister, and my nephews and nieces.

So if I could do it again, I would! Because now I got too deep in the game.

-Lil' Mono

From The Beat: There's nothing like losing your mother, at any age; but being fourteen is confusing enough. You're not a man, not a boy; or maybe you're a boy trying to act like a man, drinking and trying to prove you're down. You can't go back to being fourteen, but you can choose to spend more time with your family and less time on the street when next you're home free.

Running From The Truth

I used to run from the truth about my drinking problem. But, until one day I looked in the mirror and seen myself, I stopped running from the truth and I just stopped drinking.

When I used to be in love, I used to run from the truth. But now, I try to deal with it and this is how I was running from the truth.

-Lonnie

From The Beat: You are a strong person to be able to just stop drinking like that. What was it about seeing yourself in the mirror that made you realize that you have a problem? How did you/are you dealing with it?

"Doing It Over"

The Reset

If I had a chance to do something over, there's a lot of things I would like to rethink and do over. I would like to think back to when I first came in here; I would have played my cards smarter.

Another thing I would think back to is when I first started smoking weed. I would do that over because I would not smoke; I would just save my money. I could be a young balla if I didn't smoke.

-Bear Weezy B2

From The Beat: We bet a lot of folks would be richer today if they left the drug habits behind. Can you keep this in mind once you return to the free world and are faced with the temptation of weed again?

I'd Do That Over

If I could do it over, I probably would not have pulled that trigger that got me in here. 'Cause it really wasn't worth it. But I did what I did and these are the consequences. Can I handle them? I don't know!

RIP to the homies.

-Clifford B2

From The Beat: Thanks for being so honest. We don't know if you can either, but you have to, regardless. Next time maybe you can think before you act to avoid being in the Hall.

It's Hard

If I was to do something that I did in my life over, I would have to say it's the first time I got wrapped. That was when I committed robbery. It wasn't just a robbery to them, it was a strong-armed robbery.

I got played because it wasn't all that bad. On top of that, it was a felony. I was so mad, but point blank, if I only knew they were gonna play me like that I would have did worse.

In reality, I should of never did the crime. Now I'm stuck doing more time. You see, once in the system, it's hard not to mess up. Basically, that's how I see it for me.

-Tin YTEC

From The Beat: You seem to be pissed at the system for what you, yourself, are responsible for. A "strong-armed robbery" that "wasn't all that bad" is a contradiction. Can you imagine being the victim of such a strong-armed robbery? We don't think you would dismiss it quite so easily if you were. As for messing up when you're in the system, if you do what is asked of you by your PO, or by YTEC — get in the house on time, and don't get any new charges — maybe it wouldn't be so hard. If you want to get out of the system that is the easiest way to do so.

My Past

Doing it over for me is to do a lot of things that I did in the past to make my life the way it is now. If I would have gone to my auntie's house in Richmond instead of staying in San Francisco, my life would be different right now.

I wish I could have started my life over from my teen years, 'cause from then on up, my life has been crazy. I started fighting, getting kicked out of school and a lot of other problems in life.

-Gabriel B4

From The Beat: Of course, we asked you to think about doing something over, and you wrote just what we asked. But still, you can drive yourself crazy by dwelling too much on thoughts like, "If I would have gone..." We all can look back and wish that things were different — we all have "could've" and "should've" in our vocabularies — but looking forward is the only way to change the things we regret in the past.

I Needs My Education

If I could do anything over, I'd go back and get an education, 'cause if I had got a better education, I woulda had a job, and I wouldn't have been robbing people or trying to sell drugs.

Most people probably think I would say that I woulda never have started gangbanging, but I can't say that because I knew what I was gettin' into when I got jumped in. So I'm not gonna say I regret that 'cause I knew all the risks involved before I got in.

But there are lil' things that I'd go back and change. Like I would never have started messin' wit' a certain female. I ain't blamin' it on her, but she is part of the reason I'm in all this shhh right now, so I would change that. If I would never have started messin' wit' her, I woulda never started stayin' out all night. I would stay at her house 'till like eleven, and after eleven, I ain't goin' home, so I with her stayed wit' her or pulled an all-nighter with my ninjas, and that got me into stayin' out all the time. It went from a few days to weeks and weeks. That made me violate, and lead to hella other stuff, and after that, I just started comin' back again and again.

-Tyree B2

From The Beat: Good, detailed piece, Tyree. Where to start? First, can you get more serious about school now? Second, how old were you when you got jumped in? Are you sure you could really understand everything involved

That's What I Would Do

Do better in school is what I would do if I could start all over; I would get good grades in school, and stay focused in my books.

I ran from the truth a lot. I didn't want to face any of my responsibilities. I knew what I had to do, it was just a matter of time till I came face-to-face with my problems.

My problem is drugs, and I need to quit.

-Mitchell B2

From The Beat: Right on for writing on all the topics, but next time it'd be cool for you to take just one topic even deeper. Have you stopped running from your responsibilities?

No Smoking

I wish that I could change the choice I made to smoke.

-Young Skits YTEC

From The Beat: What's stopping you from making that change right now? What would be different if you had never smoked?

It Makes Me Wonder

Doing it over.

It makes me wonder.

What I need to do to recover.

I need to get further to another destination.

My life is what's crazy.

Out there doing shady

Missing my baby

I ain't see her.

I hope to see her soon.

Instead of being in a little room.

I can do it over, I swear.

I am going outta of state.

I need a real dude to be on some real shhh.

'Cause Tiff don't bullshhh

Ninjas know me

I'm 'bout my money for real

And stay representing.

Doin' it over I will do.

'Cause it's time to do the fool.

-Tiffany GU

From The Beat: What are you going to stay representing? We hope it's something positive, otherwise it won't be worth your time.

Just Stop

What I would do differently is stay in a child's place, because I know what I do is wrong, like selling dope, holding guns, running through people's pockets. I think that shhh ain't worth it no more because we gotta trip.

People is out here dying because we keep doin' the same stuff that get us in trouble. I wish we could stop most of this violence. People don't care, but I do. Peace.

-Lil' James B1

From The Beat: Why do you think people keep doing the same things that get them bapped up? You still have some years before you have to be grown, so don't be in a rush. It'll be enough when it gets there. If you can't stop all the violence, can you stop your own contribution to it?

Who are
my real
friends? All
I have is my
family.

The Things I've Been Through

Okay, doing it all over again. I always try even though everything always happens and though it would never make me think that I wanted to do it all over. I try to forget about things I go through, but it never went away, so I had to stick with a lot of what I go through.

I try to be strong and be someone a lot of people can look up to. Things happen that I wish would never have happened. Sometimes I cry, but as I say, I will be the strongest person ever. Always and forever the most of love.

-Zakia GU

From The Beat: You have been through a lot we wish you never had to go through. It's almost impossible to forget all of these negative things, but you can get through them and keep them from messing up the rest of your life. What do you want to accomplish in this life with all of the strength you've built?

Just Walk Away

Something I wish I could change is what I did when I robbed someone for no reason. I wish I could think about it before I do it and try to walk away.

-B-Ray B1

From The Beat: If you had "no reason," why did you do it? How can you make sure to think things through in the future, and then do the right thing?

Do Over

Ever since the first day I got locked up, I wish I would have never gone where I got when my mom told me not to go there.

I was just a little kid, not knowing what's up. But I find myself thinking and knowing what's up in my life now.

Who are my real friends? All I have is my family. I want to do many things over, but the main one is me coming here.

-Who B4

From The Beat: Wishing you never came to juvenile hall is not enough. Can you make a list of things that led you here? (Start with the day you came here, and work backwards, step by step.) Once you see the steps that led you here, are you able to give any of that up, so that your steps will never lead back here again?

Not Necessary

I would think it over and say this isn't necessary. I would do everything the opposite of the reason I am here. I would hang with the same people, but not out on the corner. It would be doing something good like hoops.

-Joseph B1

From The Beat: Good idea. Can't get wrapped up for playing ball, right? What else could you do to make sure you don't come back?

Doing School Over

If I had to do something all over again, it would be me going to school. I think if I would have just stuck with school, I'd have my diploma, and I would start thinking about going to college.

I would be thinking about stacking my money and planning to move out. I see all this now that I'm locked up. I think if I would've just stayed in school, maybe, just maybe, I wouldn't be here.

-Juicy-Loo B5

From The Beat: You say that you see all this now that you're locked up. Does this mean your vision will change when you're no longer locked up? Or, having seen the importance of your education as key to your future, will you try to obtain that key even when you are again a free man?

Back From The Future

I'm sitting here in a cell agitated at myself because I could have easily avoided waking up in here.

I was on my way to my program, which I was supposed to start that same day. I was full of hope that day because I had been telling my family I was going to start a job, as well.

It all started because of where I chose to stand and also where I live. I'm a gang-related Latino living in a rival gang's neighborhood. I woke-up, got ready, and thought of a way to get out of my house. I regularly call "Taxis" or rides from friends, but on the 17th of May, I had not one dollar and my friends were busy themselves.

I had to go to the program before my probation officer locked me down, so I grabbed my hand gun, put it to my waist, and walked out my door praying to God I'd make it back home alive. I was halfway from where I was supposed to go. Then, someone that recognized me, ran up to me and hit me, so I pulled back and tried to grab my gun. Then, I dropped it.

He saw it and ran towards a school of little kids. I didn't follow him when I saw them, so I thought that was the end of that, until the police pulled me over with that same guy pointing at me saying, "It's him," and twisting stories around.

If I could do things over again, I'd try my hardest to avoid gangs and keep my ears open to my mom.

-G-Man B4

From The Beat: There are a number of lessons you might have learned from this. First, that if you carry a gun you're very likely to use it. Second, if you use a gun, you're very likely to injure or kill someone (maybe not even the person you want to hurt) — or be hurt or killed yourself — not to mention going to jail and becoming the system's slave (as you have now become). And third, if someone hits you, why would you respond by trying to shoot them? Wouldn't a fair fight be fists against fists? How will you avoid gangs when you're out of here?

Gotta Be Careful

I wouldn't have done the same mistake again. My mistake is coming back to YGC. Next time I'll think before I do something. That's my only problem, I don't think enough before I do something.

Next time I'll be smarter. Even if I make the same mistakes again, I'll be in serious trouble and won't get out for a long time. So I really gotta be careful next time.

That's not the only thing I gotta do, I also gotta concentrate on other important issues.

-James B1

From The Beat: Knowing the consequences you are facing, how are you going to be able to stop something in the heat of the moment and think about it rationally? When you say next time you'll be smarter, do you mean you'll do the same thing in a slicker way, or that you

"Doing It Over"

Can't Do It

My problem is that I can't do the probation. It's hard for me 'cause I can't do it. I can't make it home on time.

It's just that my friends and I are having too much fun, then I just mess up. Then I get caught, then go to court..

-Ricky B1

From The Beat: You may not want to do your probation (you're making a choice), but you definitely can do your probation. It's actually pretty simple. Are you having fun now? If not, maybe it's time to think about kicking it with some different people — or wear a watch with an alarm so you'll be reminded twenty minutes before you need to go home.

Do It Over

I will stop mingling with the wrong people. I came out of my house and I was sitting in my car, not doing a damn thing and the police looked at me and came on the lot.

I sort of ran from them, but it happened way too fast. The officer said, "Come here, someone needs to talk to you at the station."

Then, I was in YGC for something that I did not do. I was shocked.

-Spoon B4

From The Beat: So, what is it that you'd do over? Would you not come out of your house? Not sit in your car? Not run from the cops? What?

Doing It Over Again

There's one things that I wish I could do over again, and that would be me staying wit' my amor (my love) and really be faithful to her. Man, I messed up, and I know that for that reason I scared her for life.

Now I got to deal wit' that shhh for the rest of my life. Every time we get into a conflict, she always brings it up, even when I say it up, I mean me cheating on her wit' a large number of girls.

However, she still took me back 'cause she sees a better man in me. Peace out, Beat. This is my last time in YGC.

-Status B5

From The Beat: If you stay with your girl — and, if you honor your commitment to be faithful to her — she will bring up your infidelity less and less. In other words, you have to devote a little time to earning back her trust. But if you cheat on her again, you probably won't have to deal with it for the rest of your life, because she will (and should) leave you.

Do The Whole Year Over

If I could do something over, it would be to replay the whole year over. The reason why is because I'd like to make a lot of stuff up to my girl Shena, feel me?

It's like I got locked-up like for two days before my Winter Ball, and instead of calling her to tell her I was going to pick her up, I called from jail. I would like to make up all the time I've missed from her.

I love her, and I dig her like a shovel. I wish I can turn back the hands of time 'cause I'd be in there like swimwear. One.

-Afro B4

From The Beat: Well, we're not sure what swimwear has to do with it, but it sounds like one of those sad stories we hear every time someone gets locked up. We hope you can call on this memory, once you're back on the outs, to keep you from repeating some of the mistakes of the past...

All About Me

If I could do anything over, I would have paid more attention to myself and stayed focused on myself, paid more attention in school, and what my mom and female told me. Ya feel me, 'cause it's hard playing catch up and not knowing things.

-Lil' Carl B2

From The Beat: You are right; it is very difficult to catch up on lost time. Are you working on catching up on school now? How are you going to make sure you stay out this time and not lose any more time to the Hall?

Never Have Done What I Did

Man, if I had to change my life, I would never did that thing that day. I can be at home with my family right now.

But now I'm in here so I can't do nothin'. So, yeah, holla back at me out.

-Ricky B1

From The Beat: Knowing that you can't go back and change the things you did, how are you going to make it up to your family when you get out? What do you have to do so that you will always be able to be at home with them when you want?

It's Not A Joke

If it was something I could do over, it would be not taking life as if it was a game when I was out. It would be like all the things that I down play with a joke, or just say, "Well, that's how things are," when in reality some of the things that was happening around me was not how life was supposed to be.

Being on your porch or at a friend's house while hearing shots going off as if it was a car starting, sometimes even being involved in the shots, that's not normal. That's not a joke or how life is supposed to go.

So if I could do something over again, I would take like more to heart and stop down playing what be going on around me.

-Leek B5

From The Beat: Do you plan to be locked up for the rest of your life? If not, then what will prevent you from taking things more seriously from this point on? Was it coming to the Hall that made you see your life differently, or were there other factors that are responsible for this new maturity?

The Negative

If I could do some shhhh over, I do over all of the negatives shhhh I'm in here for, all 10 counts. I would call all my ninjas that died that day before they die an' tell them ta be extra smooth an' keep them eyes open, but only make smart moves.

Another thing I would do over is I would go ta school every day, even when I'm sick. I would play "Isn't She Lovely" by Stevie Wonder every morning to my mom when she wakes up

-Pg B5

From The Beat: Are you sorry that you committed whatever charges brought you here, or just that you got caught? Why wouldn't you warn your now-dead homies just to give up whatever they were doing in order to protect their lives? It's still good advice, which we hope you will follow in your own life.

My Life

I wanna change my life and go back to school. If I listen to my mom, I would not be here and would go home.

-All Ears B1

From The Beat: What do you need to do to make these changes? When you get home besides the things you mentioned, what else is going to change? Will you remember what it felt like to be locked up?

"What's Your Problem"

Problem

My problem is being up in the Hall. Ain't shhh to do, there's nothing I wanna do. Just a boo boo ass schedule like the one we do every day here in max.

At school we have to deal with the same dumb ass teacher. He's a straight up square. Always kickin' people out of class for some lil' ass shhh. Most of the time he be outta pocket doing too much. That is one of my problems.

Another one is not being able to see my moms everyday plus my family. Even though it's not like we be with each other 24-7 on the outs, at least I get to see them everyday when we are home together. Another problem is my female, I'm not able to be with her, or to touch her, and spend time and do what we do best.

I also miss kickin' it with my homeboys. Only half of the ones I know because it be some j-cats out there that be fakin' the funk. My problems all root out of my biggest problem of being up in the Hall — locked up. I already know how. I wanna say was up to Aug, keep your head up, and to "The Beat" when y'all write your comments on the bottom don't lecture me about my stuff because I already know how to get rid of my problems. But thanks for publishing, I'm out.

-Lil' John

From The Beat: It's seems like you on top of things, huh? You just keep that mentality and not let anything or anyone mess that up. Be easy... What are your plans to get rid of these problems? Since you knowin' start sharing!

Can't Stop Hanging Out

what's my problem
smoking weed
what's my problem
drinking
what's my problem
getting a d-u-i
what's my problem
living my life
what's my problem
getting girls
what's my problem
going to school
what's my problem
popping e pills
what's my problem
getting a job
what's my problem
can't stop hanging out

-Maurice

From The Beat: You're living the life of a young addict, and unless you decide to make some changes, as you get older, your world will get colder — till you freeze or drop to your knees.

Problems

The only problem that I got in my life would have to be the influences in my life. What I mean by that is the kind of friendships I got. The only people that I really kick it wit' are either drug dealers, gangbangers or just some down ass ninjas that are down for their turf, and they just don't give a shhh.

At the beginnin' it was coo 'cause I started to do shhh that I had neva done before. After about six months I caught my first case it was Grand Theft, but it was nothin' 'cause I got off on probation, but my patna had to stay in.

After a while he got sent to Camp. After I got probation I promised myself and everyone else that I wouldn't come back to the Hall, but before the year ended I messed up my life kicking it wit' this square ass ninja.

I regret doin' that shhh 'cause now the judge has to decided what to do wit' my life and I don't like that.

Don't get me wrong 'cause I got love for my friends, but they just be gettin' me into too much trouble. But the only person that I probably won't respect ever in my life would have to be my co-part 'cause he lyin' on me. But I ain't goin' to have grudges against him. He has to do what he has to do and I don't blame him for it.

But to all, stay up.

-Lil' Carlos

From The Beat: It's a hard lesson to learn that most everybody just gotta watch out for they self. It's a cold world, but the good news is that your world doesn't have to be. How can you make the best of your situation? How can you make sure that you don't make the same mistake twice? When you are released, how will you pick and choose the company you keep?

Locked Up In the System

My problem is that I'm locked up in the system — and I'm trying to get out of the system so I can kick it in the 'hood and post like used to post back in the days.

I want to take care of my varrio, 'cause we need to be in the outs taking care of the 'hood — and not be locked up here in the system! But my problem will soon go away, if I just pimp this program. So that's why I'm not even stressing.

I'm just trying to do my time and get the heck out of here, so I can do what I have to do. Well, I just wanted to say to all locked up — pimp your program and get the heck out of the system. 'Cause we need to be in the out! Take care and stay trucha. Alratos.

-Giggles

From The Beat: If you're only doing time, then in reality the time is doing you! 'Cause just as you say, you'll go back to what you used to do — and that's how you got locked up, foo! Plus the last thing your varrio needs is another young gee rolling around drunken and belligerent.

Not Be Here

My problem is that I should not be here. I was driving on EM. I was going to my (high school) jr. prom.

The guy that rented it (the car) to me said it wasn't stolen. So, I was driving to Oakland to my patnas house so we could make our CD, and next thing you know police pull me over. So, I stop, did not try to run and I thought they was going to ask for my license. But they pull out guns on me like I some kind of killer. Then they tell me the car has a kidnapping and a murder on it. I wish I never got in that car.

-London Webb

From The Beat: Damn! Sometimes we are just in the wrong place at the wrong time. And, we make stupid decisions and we hang with messed up people. How can you avoid this situation next time? Is there a way to prevent this? We know the answers too. What could you have done differently? Don't you think it's kinda shady to rent a car from someone who feels the need to tell you that it wasn't stolen? Maybe the best thing you can do is to be more careful of who you rent cars from. What do you think?

What's Yo' Problem?

What, you ain't havin' that money? Oh, I see, you ain't got no female, huh? You mad, 'cause you a square, but you wanna be from the hood? I'm saying, tho'. What you think it's a game or something? You out here, lookin' too dusty in this life! Yeah, you gon' learn, tho'.

Keep ya head up and stand tall through the fall. Oh, yeah, 'cause you gon' go down. Just keep ya sucka free repellant spray on, 'cause they come around like fleas, you ol' Fila-wearin' ass. I'm saying, though, and please stop all the foolishness, runnin' around, bustin' in the air. What, yo' so square, you ain't got no enemies to bust that thang at? I see! Don't even trip.

I'm through talkin' to y'all, and for those who know me, stay solid, and do ya time. Don't let the time do you, feel me?

-Emmy-Bo

From The Beat: We can tell you are showing some tough love on the person(s) you are talking to in this one. You would equate someone as square for not having enemies and we would think a person with no enemies is a noble and good person with no chip on his/her shoulder. It's good to encourage people not to trip but leave out the criticism. How can you add your intelligence and good heart to staying solid?

Why I (Drink and) Smoke

I smoke purple to keep from stressing. And sometimes I smoke it just to feel good. Whenever I have any problem, I drink and smoke so that I can forget about everything that happened — and then I don't start flashing on everyone!

I've been smoking for a long time, so sometimes when I do something wrong that I don't like, and I can forget about it — I smoke to get it out of my head.

But if you ask me why I smoke every day, it's because I've been smoking for six years now. So it ain't nothing to me! Remy and Hennessy, in my system, purple weed; whenever I need 'em!

But later in life, when I get my life together — no more weed! That's when I feel better.

-Lil' B

From The Beat: If you keep smoking and drinking to avoid seeing your problems instead of either trying to solve them or figuring your part in how the same old problems always start — you won't be feeling better, ever! You'll be feeling worse. Break your habit while you're young, 'cause it only gets harder as time goes on. Learn how to handle stress without either starting mess or running to smoke and drink. Keep a clear head and think.

People in the Hall

my problem is people in juvenile hall who think they're hard when really they're just living a lie

-Lil' Greg

From The Beat: Getting it half-right can will hurt you. Your problem remains you and what you choose to do.

**I
messed
up my
life**

Not Taking Care Of Business

My problem is, I was not taking care of business. I know I should have, and next time I will.

I need to get into a program that will fit my needs. If I get a last chance it will not be wasted. When I return to my placement I will think before I act.

-Cory

From The Beat: Good for you. It seems like you are on the right path, the right way of thinking. Take care of yo' business in fulfilling your needs! What are your needs?

My Problem

My problem is listening. I don't like to listen to nobody because I don't like for people to tell me what to do, but now if they was to tell me what to do, I would listen to them.

When I did not listen that made them mad, but they knew that they could not put their hands on me because I would fight them back.

-Latosha

From The Beat: Okay Latosha, now listen up. Do good, stay out of trouble, be a role model, respect yourself, make yourself proud, make us proud, excel in life, study, learn, be generous, show compassion and eat your vegetables. Thanks for listening. We love ya'.

Problem #1: The System

my problem is the system
my problem is the p-o's and judges
my problem is the system having us minors
living court date to court date
not knowing when your release is going to be
because that's how the system operates

-Lil' Greg

From The Beat: Why do you keep putting yourself in the power of the juvenile justice system. Even if you don't get caught often, you do get caught! Problem #1 is what you choose to do.

Them Females

what's my problem
my problem is these
scan'lous females
when you on the outs
they be all up on you and stuff
but when you up in here
they leave you and stuff
that's why you
don't trust a female

-Rocket

From The Beat: Maybe she trusted you to stay out of trouble, so you'd still be free to be with her at the prom or whatever. Why do you have to keep getting in trouble like this anyway?

These Streets

One of my problems is these streets and stayin' out of them. Stayin' on the spot even when it's hot not listening to nobody being hard headed and stupid in these messed up streets doing hot shhh not given a shhh about what moms and everybody sayin'.

But sometimes when I'm alone I think about the stupid mistakes I made, but right now I'm thinking about when I had this pretty little female that was ready to ride wit' me. But shhh, like I said them stupid mistakes — feel me? But she was a cool lil' female but me out here tryin' to do my thang I didn't have no time to start no relationship, at least that's what I thought, but one day I'm gone change. Hopefully, I will quit tryin' to survive on my own and start listenin' and cut these hot ass dreads.

-Lil' Molly

From the Beat: How are you going to keep out of trouble? What are your strategies? You know there's going to have to be a lot of sacrifices if you're serious about changing. There's some things that you would have to do that you don't want to do, like kickin' it with your friends if they're the ones that's influencing you to do things that will get you caught up. And we know you don't want to get caught up, right? There's a lot things that champions do that they don't want to do, but they do it to keep their title. That's what you have to do. Are you serious about this? Are you a loser or a champion? Cutting those dreads is probably a good idea!

"What's Your Problem"

99 Problems

Man, I got 99 problems and a female is not one. Ha! Ha! Ha! But on my real, my problems started off when my ninjas from the block got killed. That shhh turned my life around.

I started selling weed, playing with guns and all that good shhh. Then I got shot and it was not cool at all, because I could be gone right now. So I thank God. I feel like He put me here for a real reason, 'cause He got hit like I got hit, but He is not breathing.

-Yb

From The Beat: That's cool you realized God's reason for your surviving that bullet and being locked up right now. That's an amazing thing to write, Yb. Some believe God breathes through us if we find our purpose in life. Now make it your mission in life to live righteous, helping yourself and your brothers and sisters.

**I thank God.
I feel like He
put me here
for a real
reason**

What Your Problem?

Well, my problem is I shot up, had to come here. I mean, I was mad, but I couldn't do shhh. My problem is, I can be doing other shhh, then this like playing football or some other sport. I'm just sayin', though, I ain't no square ninja; I got goals in life.

I'm sayin', though, I ain't the baddest ninja, but where I come from, we be fast to... I know all that ain't the right thing, but when you coming from where I come from, you got to keep something on yo' hip.

I've been living this life going on seventeen big ones. I've been coming to this shhh for about five years. An' the first time I came, I looked at it like it was every other time.

I'm telling you, like this, my problem ain't never been with no chick. I'm down, an' all I got to say to my big bras that's in heaven — just save me a place. I see you in a few.

I give a RIP to my ninja, Critty Bo, Ant, Mikey, Mat, B-Bo, Lil' JJ, Flip, Gene, Grewdy, Charley Mac. I'm goin' to be eighteen.

-Lil' Da Da

From the Beat: You told your dead homies that you will see them in a few?! Oh Da Da, we hope you can try to value your life and other people's lives more. Lots of people from Oakland don't carry guns. What is it about your life that makes you think you need a gun? Protection is important but do you bring the drama on by how you live and maybe because you got a hustle? Keep in mind that if someone else gets hurt or dies, you or a loved one will get hurt, incarcerated or die. You are important to many.

I Wish I Knew

What's my problem? I wish I knew. It seems like the streets has takin' over or is gradually takin' its toll on me.

The reason I say this is because every time I get out of jail, I say I'm not coming back, but, I always seem to come back. So that's what's my problem.

-Aj

From The Beat: Okay, so you've figured out what the problem is, now what? You gotta make a decision. What's more important to you; the streets? Your freedom? If you don't want to come back to the Hall, what can you do? How can you prevent this? Every decision that we make has consequences, you decide, which consequences do you prefer?

I Don't Do Reality

My problem is I dream too much and don't do reality. Then my big imagination makes me lazy.

-Larry

From The Beat: There's nothing wrong with dreaming, Larry, but what is there about reality that you don't want to deal with? It's frustrating to find yourself so far from your dreams and easy to give up. Figure out what will motivate you and stay focused, and go back to that over and over again.

Being In Here

What's my problem? Being in here! I don't like being in here, because I can't help my fam-bam. And when I'm in here, if I have problems, I can't solve them.

The only answer is to get free! But that will not happen anytime soon. So for now all I can do is think about what I'm going to do when I finally get out. Also I think about how to avoid having problems. To all locked up, keep your head up.

-Lil' Wino

From The Beat: The time you spend thinking about how to avoid problems on the outs, is time well-spent. 'Cause if you can figure how to stay out of trouble, you won't have incarceration burst your bubble. But keep it real: a job is the best way to pay bills.

I Get Mad

What's my problem? I am too sensitive. I get mad at little things. Sometimes I am impatient. I get mad when things don't go my way. My problems used to be worse though, and I know I am working on them.

I have more problems, too, but I don't feel like talking about them right now. One more problem I'll mention is how I don't like to talk when I am upset. So I let all my anger build up inside — then just let it all out at one time.

-Anthony

From The Beat: If you're working on your problems and see yourself getting better, that's the most anyone can do! Just being aware of them, helps you change, too.

**I always
seem to
come
back**

What's Your Problem?

I wish I knew what's my problem. Because what I'm in here for is being at the wrong place, at the wrong time.

For the first time in my life I really didn't do nothing, so that's all I got to say.

-Daddy Long Legs

From The Beat: That's all you got to say? What are you thinking about? You are in this situation, so, how do you feel about it. Do you think that you can avoid being in the wrong place again? Or do you feel like it's no big deal. Have you learned anything from this experience?

"What's Your Problem"

My Problem

My problem is weed. I smoke too much ganja, but it's some good stuff. When I get out, I am going to smoke until I throw up. The best weed is "purple," "glue," and "nade." The last one can really mess you up, and I forgot to mention "blueberry."

Man, I need some trees hella bad, for real on the one. If I see you on the streets and you got five on it, we're smoking, but don't play me. I will beat yo' butt.

-Newt Capone B4

From The Beat: We thought, from your first sentence, that we would get a thoughtful piece about a real problem. But instead we get this tribute to pot, even after you state it's your problem. Problems are things we try to solve or avoid, not things we embrace and salute. If you want to write a real piece, tell us how weed has been a problem to you. Did it have something to do with you coming here, for example?

Flashpoint

My problem is that I get mad hella quick. At times I end up messing somebody up just because I'm a hot-headed person. I have that type of anger problems.

-Es YTEC

From The Beat: How are you working towards controlling your anger? Most people don't even acknowledge that they have a problem, so it's good that you recognize it. Our experience with uncontrollable anger is that it usually hurts us more than the object of our anger. What are the best strategies you have learned to deal with this problem?

Not Changing

People say my biggest problem is that I'm a gang member, and I ain't thinkin' 'bout changin'. Yeah, I'm ready to get an education, stop robbin' people and sellin' drugs, and stuff like that, but I ain't ready to stop bangin'. That be a problem in here, too, 'cause they got me listed and I can't get a roommate, and that shhhh follows you.

Everybody be sayin' that's what my problem is, but I don't think that's a problem, because that's just me. I've been involved wit' gang members all my life. I ain't finna change just 'cause time's is gettin' hard. Shhhh, this me. I might change some things about me, but to stop bangin', that would be to change my whole life. I wouldn't know what to do. I've talked to people about this, and they say this is my biggest problem, 'cause I ain't ready to change.

-Tyree B2

From The Beat: We agree with what all the other people say. Not wanting to quit banging is a big, big problem, and it can cancel out all of the positive things you try to do with your life. We hope you don't have to wake up one day facing a life-threatening situation or in the pen' wishing you'd used your imagination to figure out what else you could have done besides gangbang.

Not Listening

My problem is that I don't listen to my mom or my PO. That's why I'm here, and that I keep hanging around with the same people 'cause it's hard to stop banging.

-Jovanny B1

From The Beat: It may be hard to stop, but isn't hard to be away from home, locked up, told what to wear and when to go to the toilet? We would think that anything that can get your life or your freedom taken wouldn't be good for you. Do you plan on listening to your mom and your PO now?

Listening To Mom

My problem is getting in trouble and coming to Juvenile Hall. I will change from coming to Juvenile Hall by listening to my mom ahead of time when she tells me not to do bad things.

-Mark B1

From The Beat: Of course it is easy to say that right now, but how are you going to fight off all the temptations that will be in front of you on a daily basis? How are you going to make sure you listen to your moms instead of the homies doing wrong? Do you really need your moms to tell you when something ahead is not right? We think you already know. Listen to that voice inside you!

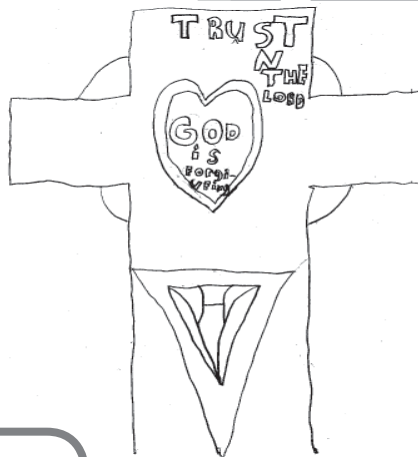
Limiting Myself

My problem is that I limit my options for help when I do stupid shhhh, like smoke weed or commit criminal acts. When I smoke and need help on my homework, I can't go to the teacher.

Or if I need somewhere ta chill at if it's too hot outside, I can't go home if I'm on the run.

-Pg B5

From The Beat: So, isn't the answer to expanding your options to be found in not smoking weed, not committing criminal acts, and not being on the run?



The Game

My problem is ninjas in the game now. They got the game messed up.

The game got rules and regulations to it when they started playin' in it. Even though rules are made to be broke, but not all the time though because people that do obey the rules just might dislike what they see and woo-whop ya. Then you'll just be another statistic that got charged to the game.

That's all I got to say.

-Fatz B5

From The Beat: There's a major irony in your description of the game and its rules, which is that the state also has rules, and when you don't obey those rules, people who do obey the rules "might dislike what they see and woo-whop ya." In fact, that's not a bad description of your current situation, is it? Why should the rules of the street game be obeyed but not the rules of the government game?

What's Your Problem

My problem is I wanted to do whatever I wanted to do instead of listening to my dad and mom when they told me that I needed to stop fighting and getting kicked out of school.

Now that I have learned something, from now on I will always listen to my mom and dad.

-Gabriel B4

From The Beat: What have you learned? How did you learn this lesson? Could you have learned it any other way? How?

Stop Talkin'

My problem is talking too much 'cause I talk a lot and it got me into trouble. That's what happened when I got caught. I kept talking when he told me to be quiet and he would let me go. But I kept talking, so he took me down.

-B-Ray B1

From The Beat: When a cop or PO or judge tells you something, they have all the power and you have none. Why wouldn't you just do what you're told? Did you learn anything from this painful lesson? What?

Me

My problem is not being on the block with the homies

My problem is not being able to get my hustle on

My problem is I can't see my wife

My problem is this damn system

My problem is the damn judge, PO, and the cops

My problem is being locked up

-Mani B2

From The Beat: Could being on the block with your homies, and getting your hustle on be the problem? You wouldn't have to be away from the wife, or deal with the system, or the judge, PO and cops if you were doing what you need to do.

**My
problem
is weed.
I smoke
too much
ganja**

People say my biggest problem is that I'm a gang member, and I ain't thinkin' 'bout changin'.

Don't Cry

My problem is that everybody is crying for being in jail, but everybody has to pay for their crimes. Don't cry because all of us were the one's that chose to be in here — not our parents, PO, lawyers, judges, or cops. It's all our fault. We didn't think about the consequences when we were doing the crime.

We all thought that we were not going to get caught, but whoever is reading this, you got caught! But if you behave and do good and not act hard in the Juv Hall, you would be able to get out.

That's a fifty percent, because lots of people get a second chance or a third, but if you don't change you will continue to come back. And you won't succeed in life. You would lose a lot in your life, like your family or someone you like a lot.

-Abel

From The Beat: You are being very critical of a whole lot of people. Sure, it's true that people need to take more responsibility for their actions, but why should putting someone in a box for long periods of time be payment for a crime. Whatever happened to the idea of rehabilitation? Are we not pursuing that idea anymore? What kind of system responses can you think of that would make you a better, stronger person, more prepared to live as a free person?

Mistaken Identity

My problem is kinda hard to talk about because it's not really a problem, but it's my problem.

There was a robbery that had happened at Hillsdale Mall. My face was in the lineup, and I was pointed at by the witness. So I'm fighting my case.

I already went to court one time, and the judge said I am to be detained for the safety of the witness. So, I'm fighting my case because it's not right for me to be doing some time for a crime that I did not commit. See, I have my witnesses that said where I was at the time of the crime, plus my mom. But it seems to not matter.

My attorney is working on that, so until I am released, this is my problem.

-Bell

From The Beat: We're sure that your attorney already knows this, but there is a lot of research showing how unreliable eyewitness identification can be. Often, witnesses who don't trust their own memories in the beginning seem to get more and more sure of their memories as time goes by — just the opposite of what you would expect. In fact, the single biggest reason for convicting innocent people is faulty eyewitness IDs. So, we wish you good luck in challenging your case.

That's Just Taeda Tae

I am what I am, you can like it or love it,
I really don't care so I think nothin' of it

That's just Taeda Tae

People say what's wrong wit' Tae,

That's the way he was brought up, so ride wit' it, Man,

That's just Taeda Tae

I be hatin' people talking behind my back,

But when I approach 'em, they act like a dog and put on an act
I'm tired of that, if you funk in let a knuckle head know the stats,

But that's just Taeda Tae, don't be mad,

If I had choices to change, I wouldn't

'Cause this who mom's had

That's just Taeda Tae

That's all folks

-Taeda Tae

From The Beat: This is a clever poem, no doubt about it, but it doesn't give us a lot of hope for your future. You seem to be saying that you are who you are and you don't plan to change anything. If we don't like it, too bad. The problem with that philosophy is that when the system doesn't like it, they throw you into a cage. Don't you really care about that? We would. Is your future fixed to your past? Will you always be writing behind four walls (the next set will be thicker) that you are who you are, and that's all folks?

"What's Your Problem"

My Problem Is...

People always got something to say, but they don't do anything about it. They just like to run their mouth, but when it comes down to back their shhh up, they go out like little suckas.

Here they come again talking shhh behind my back. All I got to say is don't talk shhh behind my back.

-Smokey

From The Beat: People have been talking shhh since the beginning of time. It only becomes a problem if you make it one. Why should somebody who means nothing to you have so much control over you? Think about it...

No Problems

My problem? Well let me think. It's that I have no problems. Yeah, I'm in here, but is that my problem? What is a problem? Not a math question. I have no problems.

I don't acknowledge things, so is it there. I do what I do. Is that my problem? Everyone needs something to do or they end up wasting their life, doin' drugs, whatever, hold up kids, blah blah blah.

But what is the problem? People do what they do. All I'm saying is I have no problems. Maybe problems have me. Living life with no problems is better than working hard and everything with problems. It could be I'm a problem...yeah, right!

Problems in life keep us focused, so what do people with no problems do? Isn't that what everyone wants, no problems?

-Ap

From The Beat: Have you ever heard of being too cute by half? It means that you've used your cleverness (and we admit, you are clever) to be funny and cute, but by so doing, you're cheating yourself out of real thought — and you're cheating your readers at the same time. For example, you ask if things you don't acknowledge are really there. (There is an ancient question for philosophers to ponder, which is: If a tree falls in the forest and no one is there to hear it, does it make a sound?) This is a serious question, which you asked in a very non-serious way, and therefore you never developed it. We don't mean to be blunt, AP, but we think it's time you grew up a little and realized life is more than fun and games. There's something under that funny façade of yours. Why not let us see it?

My Problem

I've been incarcerated for more than nine months, and that's already a problem. And now I got two of my younger brothers in here right now. Most of my dogs are in county, ROP, CYA, camp, and in here.

But one of my biggest problems is returning to the 'hood and back into my old ways. I'm trying to change, but I don't know 'til I get out.

-Dubbs

From The Beat: Sometimes our problems are only as big as we make them. Do you think there is anything you can do while incarcerated to prepare for the problems that surface out here? What are some of these things? We have faith in your ability to face your problems head on and still come out on top.

A Slave's Problem

My problem is that I am going to be locked down fo' four years in Y.A. Boy, that's some time fo' this little thug — no girls, no money and no freedom.

That's all bad, but I am a G and nothing is going to stop me. Just 'bout to knock this out and do what I was doing before. One love.

-Young Guis

From The Beat: If your problem is that you're going to be locked down for four years, then why would you get out doing the same thing? It sounds like you enjoy problems in your life. Maybe you like the security of being the system's slave more than you're willing to admit...

Stop Wolfing

I got problems with this funky place. I been doing too good in here, and still get no love. And I'm tired of people that be talking b.s. in The Beat. Most people be lying like hell.

-R Tongan

From The Beat: You may be right about people lying in The Beat, but as long as you use The Beat to tell the truth as you see it, then you shouldn't be worried about the other writers.

One Day

Caught up wit' a new charge

Now I gotta pay

Walked into court lookin' at camp

Stepped out wit' 120 days

Might only have to do 90

It ain't too long a stay

'Cause I know I'll get out one day

-Steven

From The Beat: Yes, you'll get out one day, almost everyone does. But what is more difficult is staying out. Do you plan any changes in your life on the outs to make sure you don't repeat your life on the ins?

I'm Hungry

I'm hella hungry, ain't you? I want some chicken wings and some Chinese food right now. I want some pig feet and some duck.

-Hungry Boy

From The Beat: As great as a good Chinese meal can be, we hope you will have the same hunger for such things as knowledge, love and freedom. Once you get that, you can eat whatever you want.

Weekly Writings

In The Outs

Right now I wish I was in the outs with my folks and my best friend. I miss walking down the streets of East Palo Alto and Menlo Park feeling right at home.

I just want to walk out of admissions and feel that freedom. I also want to see my bro and sis in Oakland.

I just wish I was in the outs.

-Mike

From The Beat: How much will you remember this feeling when you are walking the streets again? Will you remember it enough to be able to stay out of places like this? What changes do you plan to make in your life so that you won't be wishing for freedom, but enjoying it?

"Running From The Truth"

Ignoring the Truth

I run from the truth when I try to ignore my girlfriend's advice, because she has the most truthful things to say.

I try to think life is easy, like she says, but it's easy for me not to listen to her — and my life gets hard. But when I get out, I'm going to listen to her. She is the most important person in my life.

-Raul

From The Beat: Ain't it the truth — we make our lives harder or easier by what we choose to do! Make it easier on yourself and her, too.

Guilty Conscience

Running from the truth. I have a guilty conscience. I love this girl. We been together for about 2 years and there's things that I want to tell her — I need to tell her, but I can't because the things I have to tell her will kill both of us.

All the passion all the times we shared when I had nowhere to go — she was there, no food to eat she feed me, no clothes she would go buy me some. That girl loves with all her heart she even picked me over her family and that's love. She still writes me everyday and she tells me every time I call her she always say baby I love you and I think that hecka cute. She tells me what should I do I just tell her to pray and to get a job and stop smoking weed and lets get back to the old ways we used to be when we trusted each other.

What I have to tell you is that when I get out I will get a job and just love you better. I'm thankful for you, for just coming in my life to show me different paths and to show me how strong love really can be, I know I done wrong, but like they say Karma comes back on a person and that's where it will hurt me. I know what I did to you was wrong and you know I'm sorry and you stuck with me though thick and thin and till then baby we will ride and die together and you know it.

Easy to make promises when I'm locked up, but then I don't keep them, why? 'Cause when I'm out there, I just love being free and forget about some of the promises I make.

-Domo

From The Beat: If this girl loves you and you believe it's true love, then don't let her pass you by. Can you build trust with her again? Will she forgive you? How can you make up for the hurt you've caused? And next time you make a promise, will you be able to keep it?

Runnin' From The Truth

I'm running from getting a real job and getting legit money. Instead of working a 9 to 5 instead I'm on the street getting money with my patnas hittin' licks and hustlin'.

Every day my momma tell me, "Go out and get a job." so once a week or once every two weeks I would go get a couple applications to make my mom happy. I would fill them out and would never get a call. So why wait when my pockets were hurtin'? If they want to give me at least a call, forget 'em, I had do what I had to do. What I'm runnin' from?

I'm running from the hard way out and taking the easy road, but shhh the easy road filled my pockets.

-Big Samoa

From The Beat: The easy road may have filled your pockets temporarily, but look where it has taken you. Was it worth it? Now, not only are your pockets empty but they're not even your own pockets!

Running For The Truth

Since my great-grandmother died, I have been running from everything that come my way. And how I try to run away from it is by drink and smoke weed. Think that it's gon' help me, but after the high is gone down, I'm back to start trying to run away from my problems.

-Baby Cup Cake

From The Beat: Alcohol and drugs don't help your problems go away. Most of the time they create new problems. Running from problems won't help either, you need to face them. Problems will follow you forever, the only way to deal with them, is to deal with them, feel us?

Running From The Truth

When people kill their selves, they are running away. And some people feel ashamed to tell the truth.

-Larry

From The Beat: What would you advise someone who felt his only solution to their problems was to kill him or herself, Larry? Have you ever felt that trapped, desperate or confused? If so, how did you handle it? Have you ever felt so ashamed of the truth you lied? How can you make your future life something you are proud of?

Running From The Truth

The truth is that I made mistakes
The truth is that I did what I felt it would take
The truth is I let the streets take over my mind
The truth is that I put a rush to time

The truth is that I have to make money
The truth is that I ran and didn't know when to stop running
The truth is that I made mistakes

The truth is that my mind was raped

The truth is that I learned from my mistakes and I have me

-Juanite

From The Beat: The truth is you are a smart person. Everyone makes mistakes. Stop running from the truth, face it. You feel like you have to make money, find a way to do it that won't bring you to the Hall. You've made mistakes, well, learn from them. You can really do anything you want, you just need to decide what you want, and that's the truth.

Truth

Some truth brings lies,
some lies bring truth.

It's not that you exactly runnin' from the truth
you just probably don't wanna deal with it.
you probably think it'll be better to deal with.

I'm still running from the label they put on me as a menace even though I'm not,
I probably had a few problems, but I ain't no menace.

-Lil' Rocky

From The Beat: We sense that this piece is unfinished. What good ever came from running? How can you change the label society has put on you?

Weekly Writings

I Come Right Back

My life is messed up, because every time I get out of jail — I come right back! It seems like I just can't get no get-right!

When I get out of jail, I don't give a what about nothing nobody has to say, because where I'm from we're on a mission that don't stop. So now my life is just messed up! But I know it is something I can do about it — so you best believe that I am going to do it.

Look I still don't give a what about nothing nobody talking about, because I'm my own man. That's just the way it is, you know! But if you didn't know, now you know. But it's good thing — 'cause I'm gon' make it, if it is the last thing I do!

-Lil' E

From The Beat: You need to break free of what your folks on the block have to say, like that stuff about being on a mission that won't stop, okay? Because it'll stop when they lock you up and throw away the key! So if you're really your own man, face the truth. It's time to quit that stupid shhh and go legit! Now there's a mission for you.

Memorial Day

Memorial Day is a day we celebrate our loved ones that have passed away. And I just want to say — y'all gone but not forgotten. RIP: Criddy-bo, Lil' JJ, A-N-T, Greedy, Lil' Mikey, B-bo, Shay, Gene, Tank, Flip, Charlie Mack, KD, Freaky Fred.

-Lil' Rob

From The Beat: In honor of Memorial Day we'll print your piece, but in the future you have to write more than a list of RIPs.

Poem

man they need to stop
putting juveniles on lock-down
and putting juveniles on lock-up
and stop telling us to kiss their butt
when i first heard i said — what

-Davon

From The Beat: You need to stop putting your freedom at risk, 'cause they're not going to change after reading this.

Dear The Greatest

Dear the greatest woman in my life today, I want to say thank you for everything you've done for me over the years.

Although I'm here in this place, I want you to know that I still love you. We don't communicate like we used to, but you're still on my mind.

Every day I'm here is like hell. I miss the way you blink and the way you think, the way you smile — and I miss your style! Mrs. Ollie Lillard, much love. Yours truly ...

-Devanae

From The Beat: The best way to show your gratitude is with a change of attitude on the outs. Get back to school and be about what you're supposed to do; for her sake and yours, too.

The Truth Hurts

I can say that I sometimes run from the truth. I can see that truth hurts. I'm one of them types of people that when the truth hurts, I always try to find some way, somehow to hide it. The way I do that is by poppin' pills, smokin' weed and getting' drunk. Sorry, but true.

-Juicy Loo B5

From The Beat: We find this an honest appraisal of how you act in the face of painful truth, but we worry about your final line, "Sorry, but true." Does that mean you just accept your way of dealing with unpleasant things, or that you want to find a better way to deal with them? In short, when you are no longer a guest of the county or state, will you still be poppin', smokin', and drinkin'?

"Running From The Truth"

I Can't Handle The Truth

Yes, I have ran from the truth. When my mom told me I was going to be locked up. I ran from the truth 'cause it was hard, and I didn't want to hear it.

-B-Ray B1

From The Beat: Now that you are locked up, is this "truth" easier to face than it was to hear about it? Do you think you're now more prepared to face the truth than you were then? What would happen if you just faced the truth head on?

The Whole World Runs

The truth is something we all need. I'm not saying that the truth is good to hear, but if we don't know truth, we are our worst enemy.

I think the USA and the whole world runs from the truth. That's why this world is the way it is. I need truth in my life, because if not my conscience would eat me alive.

-Make B5

From The Beat: We agree with you that everybody everywhere finds ways to run from the truth. But we're not sure what your truth is when you say without it, your conscience would eat you alive. What truth are you referring to, and how does it keep your conscience from hurting?

Blah, Blah, Blah

Yeah, I'm running from the truth, so when my PO tells me this, I say yeah, yeah, all that. But when you go out, you don't do the things you say you'll do.

I just say whatever so I can get out faster. I've been here four times. Next time I'm gonna try to do good.

-Ricky B1

From The Beat: How about instead of trying, you just do good? It really isn't that hard: go to school, get home in time, make it to court, don't be where you aren't supposed to be, make it to see your PO, and, oh yeah, don't catch any new cases. That, our friend, is how you do good. What a novel idea.

What They Want To Hear

I run from the truth every day. They tell me to tell the truth, and I tell a lie every time. My PO ask me when was the last time you smoked, and I tell him a few months ago when it was really yesterday.

-Young Keezy B1

From The Beat: What is the point of all this wooing? Has it helped you out at all? What's the point of lying?

"I Love You"

I'm always running from the truth twenty-four-seven, fo' realz, 'cause I have so much stuff on ma mind that I don't know how to face myself. I'm in pain everyday. I'm still askin' myself, "Why does this have to happen to me?"

I didn't deserve 'dis, but you played your games so good that I don't know how to say no. You meant the world to me, but you left me in pain, and my pain goes on every day in my life.

Why did you do this to me? The three little words to me is so fake now, 'cause you left me speechless! Only time will tell.

-Baby Girl YTEC

From The Beat: It can be pretty harsh when we care for somebody and they don't care as much as we think. But this can get you ready for the next person that may be playing games. Call it a learning experience. Remember that talk is cheap. It's deeds that prove a person's worth.

Doing The Wrong Thing

I run from the truth because I know I did the wrong thing, and my mom always tells me, "Baby, you are going to stay in trouble because of the things you do." But I always thought she was picking on me, but for real, you were just looking after me.

My problem is I can't freaking follow the rules. My problem is that I don't do what my mom says. My problem is I smoke too much weed. Man, I have so many problems.

-Antoinette GU

From The Beat: This will probably sound old, but it's true: recognizing your problems is the first step towards solving them. Why can't you follow the rules? Do you think they're stupid? Do you think you know better? Can you figure out a way to just do them so you can get to a point where you can make your own rules? Why do you think you smoke so much weed? Are you trying to escape? Do you just like it? Do all your friends do it? Think about the reasons you do what you do so you can figure out how and why to change that behavior. Good luck.

Can't Touch Me

You say I'm running from the truth, I'm running from the cops. At the same time, I am in the Halls eating this nasty crap. The Halls can't touch me. I feel like pissing on my door.

-Newt Capone B4

From The Beat: If you feel that way, it appears the Halls have already touched you! The only way we know not to be touched by the Hall is to stay out of it!

Court Date

I got this big court date coming. I'm trying not to think about it, but you know how hard that can be. All I do is pray and leave it up to God, because I know He will take care of me. I think everything will work out for the best. That's how I cope with my time though.

-Diddy

From The Beat: Your method of dealing with your situation probably keeps you from major stress. But we wonder if you're willing to accept whatever happens as God's wish for you. In other words, if you have to do some time, will you be able to think of that as God taking care of you?

Lost Lil' Boy

Hangin' out past his curfew just to kick it with friends... lost lil' boy.

Smokin' weed to help him feel loose at a party... lost lil' boy.

Shoot somebody fo' his turf... lost lil' boy.

-P-Gee Zee B5

From The Beat: Man, this is a very steep progression, from violating curfew to committing murder! How can that lost lil' boy be found before the system drags him away in chains?

Free Us

Free me from YGC.
Free Tippy T from the Feds.
Free Mike G from 850.
Free Bear from YGC.
Free Turtle T from the Feds.
Free Fresh from the Feds.
Free my fam, and let us be.

-Lil' Dakota B4

From The Beat: We can certainly understand the desire to be free. We all share it. But your prayer to free yourself and your friends from jail leaves us with the question: what should be done with people who violate other people? Should we have laws at all? If so, how should they be enforced?

Summer

Yeah, man, what it is? Me? Just getting ready for the summer. I'm 'bout to be out this program in a minute, off probation, and all the stuff.

I'm 'bout to get this little job, feel me, stack that and be in the dough. Well, I get at y'all in a minute.

-Lil' Joe YTEC

From The Beat: What kind of job are you going to get? What do you plan on doing with your money once you've stacked it? Get at us in a minute, and let us know how things are going. The Beat's always gonna be around, and open to you.

Weekly Writings

Tough Love

One staff be doing me wrong because he has something against me over something that I don't know about.

Like yesterday, before Omega, I asked another staff to go get some water before Omega started. He said, "OK," so I got up and this other staff asked me where I was going. I told him that I asked if I could go get some water, and that other staff said yes.

But this staff that don't like me said no because I been up too much. I said that was somebody else. Then, he was looking stupid, like I was right.

-R B4

From The Beat: We can't say what happened because we weren't there, and we only have one side of the story. However, not every disagreement or staff reaction is because a staff doesn't like you. Maybe it was just a case of a misunderstanding, or just a mistake. Anyway, given all the things facing you, this seems pretty minor to us.

True

Someone once told me that the road to happiness is the road to richest. I figure that they are lost on what happiness is because anybody can be happy no matter their financial status in life.

-P-Gee Zee B5

From The Beat: If money isn't the secret to happiness, what is?

The Way It Was

I wish you were here with me
But it would probably never be
They way we played, the fun we had
Is all in the past
I wish it could have last
It happened so fast
I love you and I wish it never passed.

-Jasmine GU

From The Beat: What caused this relationship to end?

How I Feel

How I feel is I'm ready to change. This shhh is gettin' played out for real for real. I'm getting too old to be sitting around with messy females. About to catch another case, but I let it slide. Chicks talk out the side of they neck but don't flex. I tell them like it is, but now I'm not gonna let nobody hold me down.

Like Tupac said, "Keep your head up 'cause I'm fed up." That's how I feel, and right now I ain't trippin' about who's tryna hold me back 'cause I'm moving forward. I'm steppin on females' backs, betta believe that. That's real talk.

I've been through so much and I don't let it hold me back. I'm stressing, but I don't let it show. People don't know how I feel or what I've been through, and that's how I feel.

-Toya GU

From The Beat: Good for you, Toya. Keep moving forward so you don't have to keep looking back. We have confidence in you. By the way, try to find someone you can share your feelings with; it can help.

To You

I love your beautiful brown skin against mine while we make sweet passionate love under the sheets calling my name I'm doing the same I feel for your game or should I say your confidence when we met when you first kissed me I got dumb with sweat I promise you're my best bet If I'm not with you, trust I'll never forget.

-Danielle GU

From The Beat: Steamy. How does this young man treat you?

Poem

Every morning I am thanking my stars
Feel so lucky having you in my arms
Wouldn't be the same without you baby
There's not a thing about you I would change
I'm incomplete when you're far away
And when you're here, you make me whole again
At first I really didn't trust it or believe it
I found someone who will make me say this and mean it
Couldn't imagine life without you
I want to wrap my arms around you
You're like a miracle in the month of May
I just want to kiss your face
Sometimes I have to stop and stare
Might even run my fingers through your hair
Just to see that this is not a dream
I've got to see you smiling back at me
And I'm okay as long as you're okay
Don't have to ask, I know you feel the same
At first I really didn't trust
It or believe it
I found someone who could make me say this and mean it.

-Young Shay GU

From The Beat: Sounds good, Young Shay. What do you need to do to keep this satisfying relationship going?

My Everything

(dedicated to Rachean)

The soft, sweet way you speak to me on the phone

Your words, they ease my mind
You are everything to me
My moonlight, my sunshine

I made some promises to you
That I would not make to anyone else
I promised to love you in hard times
In sickness and in health

We met in such an awkward way
Through a friend of a friend,
But now that we are together
Our love cannot end

Obstacles will come in life
But they'll only be a test
Of all the gifts a man can have
God gave me the best

You're the apple of my eye
You make my heart sing
You're not just my pride and joy
You're my everything forever

-Wanted For Grandtheft B4

From The Beat: She sounds like a powerful incentive to get out of here, and stay out of here. After all, it's not your declarations of love that she wants. It's you!

Don't Take It For Granted

Life. Life ain't something you should play with. It's not a game. Life is too precious, 'cause once it's gone, it's gone.
Don't take your life for granted. Make something out of your life. Don't just waste time running the streets, 'cause time you can't get back. Life you can't either.
Stay positive. Stay up.

-Stagalee B5

From The Beat: Of course you're absolutely right, once time or life is spent, it can't come back. Did you always think like this? If not, what made you change? How do you stay positive?

Life's In The Way Of What?

If you could tell me what "Life seems to always get in the way" means, come holla at me. 'Cause I don't know what it means and you could help me out in life.

-Young Gudda B2

From The Beat: Hmm . . . we're kind of stumped here. We've heard something like this, but no one's exactly sure what it means. We think it means that the little things in life — like making money, eating, washing your clothes, sleeping — get in the way of having fun, educating yourself more, becoming a better person. Our advice is to try and enjoy and make the most out of whatever you're doing so your life feels full and rich.

Well, I would say I don't look at things for what they are, but what I want them to be.

Keep It Cool

To everybody who's up in YGC, keep it cool 'cause yo' time is coming to get out and make something out of y'all selves. The reason why I say that is because we ain't getting no younger, and time waits for no man. So stay safe and keep it cool and try yo' hardest to accomplish and manage ya dreams.

-Man B2

From The Beat: You're right they can't hold you forever. What are your dreams, and how are you going to work towards achieving them?

Seeing What I Want To See

What is wrong with me? Well, I would say I don't look at things for what they are, but what I want them to be. Such as if I do something that's not right, I'll just tell myself, "You not as bad as most people. Look what you did last week for them kids," or "You just don't spend all your time messing up." Things like that.

I was never looking at what was happening, but what I wanted to see by me weighing the good and the bad and always make my good outweigh my bad in my head, even when that was not the case.

It's something like a lightweight smoker saying something like, "I do a little bit of smoking." That's how I look at my wrong doing. But now I see, and I don't think like that any more. If it's right it's right. If it's wrong it's wrong.

-Leek B5, SF/YGC

From The Beat: In our experience, we have met many people who have the problem you describe, seeing what they want to see instead of what's there. We're interested to know how you stopped doing that. What happened in your life to force you to see things as they are? Was it coming to the Hall or something else? How can young people learn this lesson without having to pay the price you're now paying?

The Romanticist

Call me dreamer, the romanticist
Here I am lost in the world of love
Where I feel like there is passion
Attraction, fondness and tenderness
As I walk past you, I inhale your essence
So I can remember your presence
I am lost in a fantasy where it's all an illusion
They can call me whatever 'cause all I think about is you.
You make me feel like a love puppet,
just pull my little strings and I'll do anything. Everything
you say is my command
Make me do right or make me do wrong
I am your puppet.
When I am with you, everything is right
My days seem bright and I can see the light.
You take away the tears in my eyes
and bring new joy and happiness in my life.
Ever since I met you, things aren't the same
I feel like if you walk away out of my life
I will go insane.
So just remember this:
I love you like a fat kid loves a cake!

-Estrella GU

From The Beat: This all sounds wonderful and positive until we read that this person could tell you to do right or wrong and you'd just do it. Be careful, Estrella, you've come too far to mess up all of the good things you've achieved. And if this person truly loves you, she or he will want you to do what helps you most.

My Niece

The loved one of my life is my little niece. She is my life, my soul. I would do anything for her. My little one means everything.

Right now I'm watching her grow. I can't wait till she get old enough, so my niece and I could go driving around in the new Mercedes that I just finished buying for her.

-Pedro YTEC

From The Beat: How'd you make the money to buy her a new Mercedes? It seems to us that the most important thing you can give your beloved niece is your presence — being there for her in a positive way for her to model. Of all the things you might wish for her and you, taking a drive in a new car seems pretty unimportant to us.

Street Life

i was raised on the streets
that's where i get my money
holding down my spot
'cause that's all i got
i be from the town
so i know how to get down
ninjas respect my street
ninjas just can't see me

-Lil' Segue

From The Beat: When you repeat all that bull you learned to speak on the street, it just means you'll be in a jail cell or a hospital bed — or dead! Don't sell yourself cheap like that.

Dear Mom

i miss you
i know you miss me too
man it's been hard
being away from you
these last couple of days
but it's nothing

-Davon

From The Beat: Don't be too quick to dismiss this pain as "nothing" — or you might do "nothing" about it when you get out.

Rap

yo when i get out of jail
i ain't gon' be trying to go to hell
i'm'a try to get right
so i can be riding my bike
and flying my kite
and so i can party all night
because in jail they always
put a ninja on lockdown
and be trying to make us sleep
but we don't

-Davon

From The Beat: Party all night and sleep till noon, still leaves half a day for you find yourself a summer job soon. 'Cause drinkin' and smokin' and slangin' and bangin' day and night, won't help you "get right" — unless you mean get right back to lockdown!

I'm In Jail

i'm in jail 'cause i robbed
the ice cream man
'cause i wanted ice cream
and now i got to go
to a group home
for six months
i got to stay away
from my mom and my family
but i know that i'm'a change
'cause of my family
and 'cause of me

-William

From The Beat: All that talk you hear, like, "If they make it, I take it" — sounds direct and strong and clear. But the only place it takes you, is places like here, far from those you hold dear.

The County Life

the county life has me
twisted in this ditch
waking up in the morning
staff suggesting that we snitch
while i eat what the county calls "food"
my stomach grumbles
which makes me pretty rude
as i go to school
i think to myself this work is hell
easy when i could be at history class saying
"what were these people thinking"

-Marley

From The Beat: The history you need to study and understand, is what put your life in the county's hands. We don't mean the slip that got you caught, but everything that came before that first criminal thought — and what made you choose to do it.

Lil' Kev

my name is lil' kev
on the street where i live
it is always hot
oh gees on the spot
sellin' that snow
pimps and hoes
duckin' five-oh
but now i know the price
is nothin' nice

-Lil' Kev

From The Beat: This taste of incarceration is nothing to waking ten years later, and you're still suffering like when you first came here — only the time's longer and the pain's stronger.

Between You And Me, Part II

it seems that lately when
we're around each other
the tension in the air feels so thick
you could almost touch it
but i believe in us
and i believe in our love
take my hand and together
i promise we'll find a way
to make things right again
i miss that prince and princess
you and me against the world

-Rubin

From The Beat: Maybe if you'd stop fighting against the world and start working with it, you'd stay out of jail and reduce some of the tension between this prince and his princess.

I Just Love Her

there's this girl i know
that i love so much
but i don't know why
she came into my life
and stole my heart
like two years ago
since then
i can't get my mind off of her
i think about her day and night
sometimes i even dream about her
i don't know what it is
about this girl
that i love so much
i just love her

-Rich

From The Beat: Thanks for sharing the good news. It is good news right? Your inability to explain your love while thinking and dreaming about her day and night, testifies to love's mystery.

Follow-Up to "Lesson I Learned"

This is not going to be long at all, not like the original story in this same Beat, called "Lesson I Learned". But if I ask myself how I would do it over, I'd say — I would have gotten myself on the BART or bus, and, man, I would have made it home! And I would have made it to someone's prom!

So that's how I would do it over. I would have taken my own advice, like I said in "Lesson I Learned." If I only knew then what I know now, I would be home! But also if it was a fifth, we would all be drunk. And like I been told: If your auntie was a man, she'd be your uncle. So, what I'm saying is — it's best to keep "if" out of your problems.

-Lil' Tay

From The Beat: Every time you focus on how you could have escaped getting caught up for a crime if only you had your game a little tighter — you set yourself to get caught up again, like a fly to the system's spider, young friend. 'Cause you go back to exactly what got you done: selling dope and carrying gun.

The Messed Up Hall

Well i'm sitting in here, hella bored and shhh
Ninjas doing the days and they bangin' they click
All that shhh means nothing to me, i say forget everybody

Y'all staff hella bootsy ain't doin' for me
I did twenty-two days in this unit and intake
I say forget everybody, t his shhh is fake
I can't wait for three days, it go be that day

Three, two, one i'll be at home
Wish my ninja from the turf wasn't gone
Well to my ninja RIP

-Lil' Pooh-Pooh

From The Beat: What do you mean the staff is hella bootsy? What do you mean this shhh is fake? How should juvenile hall be? You say the hall is messed up, but what do you expect, you're in jail. What have you learned from this experience?

This Is How I Feel

This is yo' boy, Lil' Dirty-De
Sitting over here in max unit
Holding it down, trying really not to geese
But sometimes it's hard for me
Not to bring out the beast
But these ninjas in here be talking to me
Like i'm some type of mece
But i ain't even tripping
Because the people who know me
Know how i be in the streets
By the way
Lil' Day Day
Been talking to me
Got me ready to geese
But Lil' R-bone said
"These ninjas already know how we be
In these shady streets..."
But Lil' Emmy-Boe said
"I work too hard to be on these dubbz
Every day of the week
And i be damned
If somebody try to take that from me"
But i ain't really worried about it
Because they know how it be
And i'm going to keep it real
And always keep it lit
RIP Lil' JJ, Greedy, Ant, Cridy-Bo, Tank, KD, Lil'
Mikey, B-Bo, Mat, J Fluke,
Coke Smoke and more
I just want to say that i'll, "See y'all at the
crossroad.
Save us a spot."

-Lil' Dirty De

From The Beat: You talk about not wanting people to take your game from you but haven't you taken from others too? Are you and your homies' whole lives about getting ready to fight, selling drugs to get dubs, etc? Tell us what means a lot to you other than your life in the streets. Because the life you lead on the streets will truly wash you in a prison cell or RIP. Yet, who are we to tell you how to live, tell us more.

I need only forty credits to graduate Then go to community college

Good Grades, Football, Community College

Shhh, of course i wish i could start from the tenth grade
And get good grades
I wish i could have started a job
Since trying to find people to rob
I wish i would have tried out for football
Since now i'm trying to do it
While i'm in the Hall
But forget it, i'm still young, only seventeen
'Bout to get out in a week
And not going to be no drug fien'
I need only forty credits to graduate
Then go to community college
Get a sweet honey
But i won't be able to do it
If i go all out for the money
My stupidity
I have hope of getting away with my speed
But i'm gonna do it over
If i end up in jail another day

-Larry

From The Beat: It sounds like you're really going to do it—graduate from high school and go to college, Larry. Beautiful! You may be right, that it may be a choice for you between the lure of easy money or a college education. Check out financial aide. If you invest 4+ years of educating yourself (staying busy with studying and programs) and sacrifice the fast easy-come-easy-go money, you will have decades of success and security afterwards. PATIENCE and PERSISTENCE! Call a support service or The Beat for some leads.

What's Up?

What's up? This the homie Green Eyes from them Hayward streets. I am about to go to court in June 2nd, it's June 1st, so by the time you read this, I'll already have found out where they're gonna send me it's either CYA or back to Camp. So I could be getting' a home pass 'cause in the "Y" you ain't got shhh comin'.

Other than that I hope shhh goes well in court for me!

-Green Eyes

From The Beat: Whether you get sent to the Y or Camp, what will you do to make the best of your time? How can you make sure that your time doesn't go to waste.

Close In Heart

you're in my thoughts
and close in my heart
today and every day
never forget that you
are always on my mind
through good and bad times
i love you all the time

-Rubin

From The Beat: Promise when you get out, you'll be out to stay — because you won't go back to the same hustle as yesterday. You plan to make legitimate pay.

Be Easy

To all detainees in the Hall, the best thing you can do is pray for the better days. Besides these circumstances I've maintained a cool attitude these two months I've been here. But this summer is for me.

They took my last summer, but I'm doing it. Moving on June 9th, me and my lil' sis Elco. So for all ya'll who keep coming back be cool 'cause it ain't stickin'.

-Bt

From The Beat: Good for you, maintaining. You moving, and you have a chance at a fresh start. Keep yo' ass out of trouble. We love you, we love to see you, but we don't want to see you back here in the Hall. We want to hear from you in the Beat Without, we want to hear how well you are doing on the outs. We want to hear about your great job, what classes you're taking, you accomplishments, etc. So, make smart decisions, we know you are capable. Good luck Bt.

Dead Time

Dead time: I've spent a lot of my time in Juvenile Hall, and when I finally got a release, I still didn't go home — I came to Camp!

To me, Camp is better than the Hall, but I would rather be home with my family so I could really enjoy my life. But while I'm here, I just got to complete my program and stay out of trouble.

Then I can be there to teach my lil' brothers that they don't have to wind up in the same shoes as me, 'cause they don't need to follow in my footsteps. They can do better for themselves — and be better than I was when I was doing wrong.

-Young Lee

From The Beat: If you do that good program, you'll go home weekends for a while; then when you're finally released, you'll have the skills to stay out of trouble and never go back to the Hall. Learn that skills, and your footsteps will be blazing a trail and showing the way, for your little brothers and all their friends, too. Okay?

Scared

I'm really scared to go home
I'm a drug addict,
but I've been clean ten months.
I am scared to relapse.
I love my family and myself,
I hope I don't throw my life away.

-Candace

From The Beat: It's scary, when you don't know if you can trust your decisions. Is there someone out there that you can count on to help you? You've been clean for a while now. You know how hard it is to stop. You don't want to go down that road again. Be strong; don't put yourself in a position where you might be tempted. We believe in you, make smart decisions.

I Love My Mom And Dad

I love my mom and dad
I love them with all my heart
I love them until I die
I love my mom and dad
I know I did my mom and dad so wrong that they still love me
I love my mom and dad
I wish I could go back and be momma's girl
Now I realize that it's too late 'cause I'm in jail and now I'm going to a group home
I will always love my mom and dad until I die

-Lisa

From The Beat: We are sure that your mom and dad love you too. They are probably frustrated with your behavior. But, you are still young. You have a long life ahead of you. Prove to them and yourself that you can make it through this. You feel that you have done them wrong, well; this is your chance to prove yourself. Do what you got to do. And prove to us all that you are the beautiful, strong, young lady that we know you are.

Dedicated To David

My other half, ain't no man compare.
You stayed by my side even when your body's not standing next to mine.
We lived in each other's mind and you helped me overcome that hopeless life.
Even though we sometimes fight, I'd give my life for you without thinking twice.
Love...

-Angelique

From The Beat: Wow, you must really love this man. What is it about him that you love so much? Tell us more about your love. What do you admire about him? Does he love you the same? Where did you meet? How did he help you overcome your hopelessness? What's in store for your future together?

Pressure

when you look at me
you may think you see
who i really am
but you ain't got to know
who i really am
by getting the chance to know me
i'll give you the opportunity
if you're willing
baby boy i'm thinking
i should snatch you and make you mine
boy i got you back like a car seat
it's like me without you is like
salad without dressing
you even look good when you sleep
so what you tryin' a say
is you ready for the pressure

-Lil' Mama Hanna

From The Beat: Just don't let the romantic pressure push you off track from getting better. What you don't need is drama and distraction, or more passionate confusion and thoughtless action getting you twisted — the new you barely exists yet.

The Summertime

This Lil' Joe in max,
sitting because of the dumb choice
I made to post in the daytime,
knowing that the funk is on,
playing with the game, catting it off.
Now I must pay.
I been sitting since March and that up, man.
I go to court on June 8th.
Hopefully I get released.
Let God be with me.

-Lil' Joey

From The Beat: Hustling = incarceration and/or pain. Day or night, don't you think the narcs or cops, will be on you again, and bring you right back up into juvy? We strongly recommend you go to school and get a legit job using programs to help you. A life of incarceration is the other option.

No Turnin' Back

The life I live, is the life I lead and there ain't no other way I see it. I done put much work to earn my stripes in this game and best believe I earned them, and I wouldn't just give it all up unless someone takes me out. But that's a whole other topic. I can't sit here and say I should've did this or that, or if I could have did thangs over. Because, in reality, I'm here and ain't no way around it. All I can do is look ahead of me and plan for the future. Also, prepare for the worse.

As I sit here, waitin' to see what's gonna happen, I already know I'm YA-bound. But I wonder how long they gonna give me. Only time will tell and that's all I got on my side. But all the homies know Dru is a gangsta and he'll be all right!

But the homies in camp, group homes or getting' out on EM, HS (home supervision), I been there. Now I'm on the next level of YG (Young Gangsta) status. Pimp your shhh and get out this shhh. That all I can say to those who have a chance, because I had plenty and I messed them up. But that's life. I can't complain, because that's what gangstas go through and ain't no turnin' back. I'm out. Much love and respect.

-Yung Dru

From The Beat: Does putting in work in this game including going to juvy, Yung Dru? If so, will that someday include going to San Quentin, Folsom, Pelican Bay... to earn your adult stripes (don't forget all the abuse and violence you would have to endure in these facilities)? Do you see any adult future for yourself without the streets and bars? If so, what future? If not, when, if ever, does the game end for you? Only if someone takes you out? How many will you take out first? Is this 100% for sure the future you want? Or does some part of you want a family, peace, and success in life? Most importantly, why or why not?

Just Tripping

always my eyes
are only on you
i knew you were the only one
you had that kind of smile
brighter than the sun
i knew i had to get to you
and keep you to myself
so mija please don't leave
don't go with nobody else
(i am just tripping)

-Tripiador

From The Beat: What a trip that you let this pretty poem slip into the pages of The Beat for all of us to read. Coo'.

Being Hardhead

Being hardhead
Don't listen
Don't gave a damn
Don't care about nothing
Don't think much
Being hardhead
Don't listen to my parents
Just being so spoiled
Want everything that I want
If I don't get what I want
I be hardhead

-Lisa

From The Beat: Don't be hardheaded! Listen! Give a damn! Think! If you just stop being hardheaded, you will get what you want. Maybe the problem is you need to decide what it is you really want. Maybe you're chasing the wrong things. What is important to you in your life? Not for the moment but what do you value, freedom? Well... What do you think?

Mom's Love Poem

I'm writing this here today
I just want to let you know what I want to say
My days have gone to hell because I can't give my mom a hug,
the only real person that I say I love
As I look back and think about the things that I did,
how can I explain it? I was just a little kid
Well, not that little, but my mind was in the wrong place,
looking at pictures of you, that's the only beauty in this place
I remember when I was little how I used to sleep in your bed at night
You would always tell me nothing was wrong and say everything's alright
Or when we only had one bed and used to sleep in the same room,
It was like I was in heaven resting in my tomb
Just having you around me made me feel safe inside,
I never let my emotions show, I'd keep them deep inside
I'm here to say I'm changing, and I want things to be like when I was kid,
I just want to thank you for all the things you did
Without you mom, I couldn't get through a day at a time,
I wish you could see all the changes that's happened in my mind
No words can express my feelings towards you,
I respect all the things you do
I love you, mom, please forgive me for all the stress I caused
I know life is going on outside, it doesn't even pause
But you're the one who has my back and does everything you can
It's time I finally grow up and be a real man
Mom, I'm sorry for everything I've done
I just want to start all over, okay

-Kurupt

From The Beat: There is something very poignant about this love poem to your mom. It's as if you want to hold onto the pleasures of childhood because you see yourself stepping into the world of adulthood without the safety and security you felt in her arms. We feel you, but we also want to tell you that adulthood, with all its responsibilities, is also filled with satisfactions, achievements and fulfillment. You'll always be grateful to your mom for what she provided, and now it's time to think about your own future so that you can provide that degree of love and safety to your own future children.

No Favors

With this, I'm talkin' about staff here. Well, every unit got they coo' staff, and then they got the other staff. You got GS 1s, 2s, and 3s. Then you got people who ain't even really a GS. They just extra help.

I been here for a minute, so I know how all the staff get down. The staff that ain't coo' got issues. I think that they got beat up as kids, and now that they have power, they on a trip. That's just how I see it. Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, right?

But the staff, they don't mean nothing to me. I didn't get locked up to meet friends, but some staff I'm just really coo' wit'. It's like some staff think they got power, when really the only damn thing they got is a key. They act like they can control our lives. Some may say they can, but they can't tell us what to say and what not to say.

Man, I been doin' this too long. The thing that I trip off of is if a higher staff like a GS 3 tells me I can do something, but then another staff says I can't like a GS 2, then that gets me heated.

Another thing that gets me heated is when an extra help staff tries to get in my business, or a staff that ain't even working on your unit. Like today I was hanging something up in a class, and my pants were kinda falling down. The staff in the hallway gave me an hour room time.

Come on now. I was holding something up. I couldn't've pulled my pants up at the same time. He swears like I wasn't going to pull 'em up when I wasn't busy.

But anyways, it's nothing. I'm out in 62 days. A'ight, Beat, just some thoughts...

-Kurupt

From The Beat: We appreciate the thoughts, Kurupt, and we know that power can corrupt anybody. Also, our experience tells us that there are good people and bad people in every situation, in every job, in every school, in every Hall. All we're saying is that everybody has to learn how to deal with a variety of people in a variety of situations. It's just part of being alive. We're much more interested in what you plan to do when you get out of here in less than two months. Do you have a plan? What?

Going To School

When I was going to school I used to go blasted. I'm in class with my eyes hella red, thinking about girls instead of doing my work.

My teacher used to ask me, "What's wrong with you?" And I used to answer, "Nothing! Leave me alone, Blood!" So my teacher used to always send me down to the office.

After school, I used to go to my homeboy's house to chill and smoke ice and drink Jose Cuervo straight out the bottle. But after doing that for a while, I realized that I was messing up my life. I wasn't making it better. But I didn't give a damn, so I kept smoking and drinking until I got tired of it and stopped.

I started doing good in school, getting good grades. I like that feeling of being sober and handling business the right way. I pretty much straightened up my life.

-Enrique

From The Beat: We are encouraged to read that you like handling your business sober, and that you are straightening out your life. But we don't understand how this transformation happened. You had already realized that you were messing up your life, but that didn't stop you. So what was it that made you change? What do you hope to do when you get out of here to keep your life moving forward, and to stay free?

This Is For Real

This is for real. It ain't no joke. This time they did not give me 30 days. I got camp.

Just when everything was starting to go cool, my great grandmother died on May 30. It was her time, and she lived a good life. She died when she was a 102. She struggled for 42 years. But now she is in heaven where all the Gs stay. Sometimes I think there is a heaven 'hood, like M&M. Would she be in heaven in the 'hood in the Bay or would she be somewhere else?

She's gone, and I know she would not want me stressing on that while I'm in here. So rest in peace for all the fallen loved ones. I love you, Grandma.

-Ricky

From The Beat: Wow! 102 years old! She really did live a long life. You were lucky to have her for so long in your life. If she could talk to you now, what advice would she be giving you about your future? Will you follow it?

I'm Mad

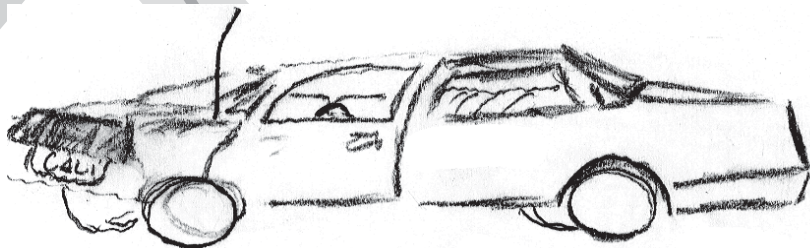
What's up Beat! Well, last week I didn't write for you guys 'cause I was at court. But right now I feel hella mad because I'm going to be in here for like twenty more days, and all these days that I'm going to be in here is dead time. I'm waiting for the people from camp to come get me

I'm mad because my girl got released on the 28th, and I didn't get to say goodbye. I'm also mad because I'm not able to be on the outs looking out for my little brother and sister.

But besides everything, I just want to leave already so that I can get my time started and be back with my loved ones.

-Giggles

From The Beat: We can understand why it would make you mad to sit in the Hall when that time is not counted toward your sentence. But who are you mad at when you can't look after your little brother and sister? Are you mad enough that when you get out of here you won't give the system the opportunity to lock you up again?



Respect Letter

Well, what's up, Peep? How ya been? Me? Cool. Just thuggin' life, feel me? Living the gangsta way.

Just got two weeks left (June eighteenth) 'til I get sentenced to ROP. In my cell twenty-four seven for the last five months. Just to give advice is that never let anyone bring you down. We all soldiers. We ride 'til we die. We don't have a perfect life. I don't.

But we got to be better and fix our problems and make ourselves better, 'cause what I hear is that a lot of homies are getting brought down and put down. That's not right. We should be helping each other. Now I want to give a shout out to some peeps of mine.

Juice: What's up homie? Stay up! I know you's a true soldier. Don't let no one bring you down. You got strong Beat pieces, stay up. Much love.

Mona: What's up girl? I feel you got strong ass writing too. Stay up. Don't let no one bring you down. Life ain't easy but make it better for yourself — be somebody. Much love.

Mono: What's up homie? Stay up, stay strong soldier. Never let anyone bring you down. Be somebody homie. Live life to the fullest. Much respect.

Chop: What's up homie? Stay up. You got strong ass Beat writing. Be strong. Keep your heart solid, peace.

To all mi familia, stay up. Much love.

-Spooky

From The Beat: Maybe your life wouldn't be so hard if you weren't so interested in the gangsta life. What do you think? But since you've probably heard these same concerns from many other people, we'll let you off the hook and ask you to give a shout out to yourself. If you could give a shout out to yourself, what would you say? How would you compliment yourself? How would you criticize yourself? We're waiting...

**We should
be helping
each other.**

Story To Tell

As a youngsta I set goals
But couldn't achieve
Dropped out of school a freshman
Then I was fresh on the streets
Lovin' the fast money
I was doin' my thang
Knowin' it's more to life
But all I know is the game
Caught a case first offense
In the year two thousand
Did four days a month of house arrest
And right back out
Been on the run fo' three years
Got caught on my fourth
The last thing I remember
I was chillin' wit' my folks
Got drunk and I blacked out
Next day I'm in jail
Hung over and can't remember
How I got in this cell
Remember, every thug got a story to tell
My first day in jail

-Player

From The Beat: We also believe every "thug" has a story to tell (which is why there's a Beat Within), and we hope you tell yours. This tight little poem is just a tease, hinting at the high (and low) points along the way. Tell us more!

I'm Runnin'

Time's goin' slow, but it's all right
I got good things ahead, it ain't out of sight
Got sentenced in court, four months ain't nothin'
Sit back, relax, decide which girl I'll be touchin'
Can't believe I'm 'bout to be free
Went from twelve to fourteen months, did that shhh like a G
They told me runnin' would only make things worse
Seems to me that it broke the curse
I partied on the run, had hella good times
Now I got two months left with more fun on my mind
That proves it more, I need to go with my gut
I'll remember that shhh when from here I'm cut
In my new place in Mateo, backyard in the sun
Screw a group home, dog, go on the run

-Rocheleau

From The Beat: We don't have quite the same faith in your philosophy as you. If you had picked up a new case on the run and had to do more serious time, would you have concluded that it's best to go with your gut? All we're saying is that using your mind can save you from situations that lead here, or worse. Your "go on the run" advice is just not responsible. Yes, it worked for you (this time), but how many youngsters have found their bad situations made worse by running? Quite a few, by our count. Of course, we want you to have fun when you're free, but only if it keeps you free. The worst result would be to give the system the opportunity to take your freedom yet again! Oh yeah, and that girl you're deciding to touch may have some say in the matter of who she wants to touch her, so maybe you should throw her feelings into the mix...

Institutionalized

The system is a joke. Why? Because when I get locked up I don't learn nothing, especially in school. Everything is the same. I've been coming in and out since I was twelve. I started out in the female unit because I was too young but after a while things changed.
Now I'm sixteen and things got harder. I went to camp two years ago and still came to the Hall lots of times. Now, hopefully, I go to ROP and get something out of that place. I'm really looking for a change now.

-What Is It

From The Beat: We believe that change is the responsibility of the individual. If you really want to change, then simply start changing. What's most important to you? Do your actions reflect that? Sometimes the things we want to be priorities in our lives aren't actually priorities when it comes to our actions. Maybe if the priorities reflected in our actions were the same as those reflected in our minds we'd all live in a much better place.

I Can't

I can't see me loving nobody but you for all my life
When you're with me, Baby,
The skies will be blue for all my life
Me and you, and you and me
No matter how they toss the dice
It has to be
The only one for me is you
And you for me
So happy together

Baby girl, you're all I think of
Every day you're in my mind.
My body quivers every time I see you
I want to be with you forever,
Spend time with you
Have a happy family with you

Please never leave me
'Cause I'd rather die
And watch over you
I just want you to know
That my feelings are true
I'll never do you wrong.

Dedicated to Denise from Smokey
Always thinking about you, baby

-Smokey

From The Beat: What makes Denise so special, Smokey? How long have you been together? What makes you so special to her? Do you plan to sacrifice anything (like former patterns of behavior) to make sure the two of you can be together once you get out of here?

Remember, every thug got a story to tell

Done Deal

Got a gang problem an' issue
Many ways to deal with it today
Smokin' weed, poppin' pills, drinkin' liquor
Straight violatin'
probation got me facin' time
Sittin' back in my cell, wishin' I could hit re-wind
One time contemplated suicide
But that shhh ain't right.
In this place, I learned to change myself
Rearrange myself.
Thinkin' 'bout getting out this place
And workin' for wealth
Got my mechanism on makin' that skrilla
Increasin' my bankroll, fo' rilla
I be killin' 'em like Missy
I'm the thrilla
In mind state, I'm the sickest
Automatic quickness
No one can mess wit'
So my problems, shhh, man,
They gonna be dealt wit'
it's a done deal!

-Fo'Thirty

From The Beat: So, this mechanism you've got for making money, is it the kind of mechanism that leads to places like this or to the good life — meaning, a free life? If it's the first, great! Go for it! (And have a back-up plan in case your mechanism doesn't work the way you hope.) But if you have to break the law to get that skrilla, you'll find the system will be spending a lot of it on your daily board and care...

Who I Be/Dat Be Me

Who I be
A young hustla to neva change
Stay on top of my game
Sparkin' fire to flame
Takin' people's chains
They ask:
"Who that light-skinned dread man
Wit' a thumper on his lap
And grands in his hand?"
That be me
Still stackin' pesos
While I'm sittin' behind four walls
In my county clothes, wit' a mean mug
Like a true hog
That be me

-Thinzel

From The Beat: Well, you may be stackin' yo' pesos, but you sure as heck ain't spendin' 'em... Will we ever get the pleasure of seeing your considerable talents put to use in a way that will not only help yourself ('cause we don't think returning trips to the Hall provide that self help), but your family, your people, your community? You have much to give, Thinzel, but your high-risk behavior puts all of it at risk, so you also have much to lose. What will it take to make you think about it?

Doing It Over

If I could take it all back now I wouldn't. I'm a be thugged out to my last breath. I just think doing a couple of things over would not benefit me.
Everything happens for a reason. So maybe I came here for a reason. God wanted me to learn something. Well I did.

-A-Dog

From The Beat: What did you learn? If you were in a discussion with God and told Him you planned to be thugged out to your last breath, what do you think He would want you to learn? Can you be thugged out without going back to jail? What if God's plan is for you to become squared out instead of thugged out? God may be talking to you right now, by putting you here. Are you listening?

**Straight
violatin'
probation
got me facin'
time
Sittin' back
in my cell,
wishin' I
could hit
re-wind**

Dialogue

(B=Blanca, T=Tommy)

B: Ay what's up wit' it?
T: What it do?
B: What it be?
T: Ya know trying to make a dollar out of fifty cent.
B: Yeah, I feel you.
T: Too bad you ain't out here.
B: It's nothin'. I got fifteen more days.
T: I'll be waiting.
B: Yeah, you do that.
T: Ay, baby girl, I gotta to handle some business real quick. It's all bad right now.
B: All right. I hit you up the day I'm out.
T: Take care, baby girl.
B: You too. Stay up. Don't get caught slippin'.
T: Late.

-Blanca and Tommy

From The Beat: Is this how every conversation between you two goes? You left us wanting to hear more. What was the deepest conversation you had with Tommy? What were you talking about? And what did you learn from this conversation?

Runnin' Too Much

Me personally, I've ran from the truth many times. If it was drama, I ran just to not hurt da other person. In general to not get caught. But at the end you end up facin' da truth — it's curtains.

-Sharky

From The Beat: It's very considerate of you to run away from drama because you don't want to hurt somebody. Some people can't even admit they ever ran away from the truth.

Running All The Time

Shhh, I keep it real. I be running from the truth all the time. Either it's from my home, probation, or anything else that gets in my way...

I tend to run off wit' ninjas that's all about their money, and females who stack and go get it, feel me. Everything seems so old to me nowadays. I've done did a lot in my life. And I do regret most of the stuff that I have done.

I'm getting older and I have made a plan for myself, which is to stop running, doing drugs, and just keep go getting it. I stay money hungry, feel me?

Well, stay up to all, in Hillcrest. Much love, late

-Lamei

From The Beat: Is it possible to be money hungry without doing anything illegal? How do you plan on getting your money? And if you plan on doing something illegal to get money, then what good will putting a stop to running and doing drugs do?

Memorial

I reminisce about back in the days I used to kick it and not smoke. We used to sip on a fifth of Hen, and chill — kick back all day, every day. It was an every day thang, feel me.

Well, you know how homegirl Mona gets down. That's how we do it. Yeah!

Well right now I already been here fo' five months and I'm about to get released in three mo' months. It's coo'. Ain't even trippin' 'cause I won't get caught slippin'. Much love I'm out al rato.

-Mona

From The Beat: We're glad you only have three months left. What did you learn throughout the five months you've been there? What do you plan on learning during these next three months? When you say you won't get caught slippin', is that a pledge not to do what got you here, or just to do it without getting caught? What are your plans after you're released?

Going Down Hill

First of all, I want to introduce myself. My name is Felix but my homies call me Chino from Redwood City. This is my first time writing in the Beat Within.

I want to say that I might face a "YA" shot for getting into a fight in here. It's pretty dumb.

I was sentenced to camp again, and now I blew it up. I think things are going down hill for me because I been here since January and I keep messing up. I messed up in camp and now I messed up in here. But I got court on June 17, and I pray to God they won't send me to the "Y."

-Chino

From The Beat: Life has interesting ways of maneuvering. When things seem like they can only get worse, something happens and they get better. When things seem like they can only get better, something happens and they get worse. Which one do you think applies to you in your current situation? If God grants your prayer, what sacrifices do you think He would ask of you?

The Truth

I have never ran from the truth. I always faced it, never ran from my enemies. I never ran from the crime I did. Could have, but why? I did what I did and I got caught. No one should run from the truth.

I always faced it even when homies thought I was a snitch, but I stood tall and proved them wrong. Ya, I would understand people if they ran from the truth 'cause it is scary. Like if you is a snitch, then you screwed.

But a real soldier faces fear, death, truth — everything. I faced all that: lies, death, fears, pain, everything 'cause nothing will stop me, so never run from the truth.

-Spooky

From The Beat: To us, the very statement "nothing will stop me" is a kind of running from the truth, especially when uttered from inside prison walls, so we find it hard to believe that you never ran from the truth. We all know the truth is hundreds and thousands of people are locked away in California prisons for being involved with gangs, so believing that you will escape that fate is not facing truth squarely. If you want to get out and stay out without standing alone like we were born to do, then you are running from the truth in a way that's devastating. What do you think?

**I have made
a plan for
myself, which
is to stop
running, doing
drugs, and
just keep go
getting it.**

Crazy

Going insane for the girl that brought light to my life, the girl that will carry my kid, the girl that will cook for me. Thinking of you 24/7 makes me go crazy. In the room getting your sweet mail with that nice perfume drives me crazy.

But one thing I don't get is do you go crazy for me, for my letters, for my calls like I do when I call you?

-Juice

From The Beat: If you really love this girl, how will you show her when you get out? Of course, you could cook for her, buy her flowers, take her out, but what do you think she wants more than any of those things? So, what will you do when you're back together to make sure you don't have to go crazy again from separation?

My Struggle

Sweaty palms, anger rising trying to stay focused

Can't sleep, angry dreams eyes stuck open

No control, all alone by myself

Hand out, lookin', searchin' for someone to help
YA destined, one last chance to change their minds

Losin' all hope, only way out seems to die

Family gone, all I got is my homies

Nights seem longer, colder, and lonely

It's a struggle with the judge and my mind

Stuck on one decision, no one listens to my side

Gotta stay strong and stay out of trouble

Mind set, gotta get through my struggle

-T Soldier

From The Beat: What makes your hands sweat? What makes you so angry? Are you really all alone, or is it that the people you are with don't understand you? We can't change the way you feel, but we can tell you, through our own long experience, that you won't always be feeling the way you feel today. That's why your "way out" of hopelessness (death) is so wrong, because it is permanent, and therefore prevents you from ever seeing the light that will dawn in your life. Sometimes you just have to grit your teeth and hold on. Now may be the time.



Woke Up Too Quick

Woke up quick
 It was 8, 8, 8
 Fixed up some Frosted Corn Flakes
 At 9, 9, 9
 I was makin' all these pennies
 And the dimes
 Then I got to the table
 Fixed some Fruit Loops
 Then I went to shoot some hoops

-Bang

From The Beat: This is kinda funny. Is this your typical day, your ideal day, or your last day of freedom?

Being Here Now

My problem is being here! But like I said, it is my problem, and I have to deal with it. And I am going to. I am gonna get a job and stay on my toes.

-Little

From The Beat: Getting a job when you're in trouble can be a great way to straighten out a lot of problems. What kind of a job would you like?

My Time Here

My PO is tryin' to keep me in here for the longest. I hate that shhh. He says I have to be in here for a minute, then he will put me on the anklet for the longest.

-Yung J

From The Beat: Just like in any relationship, you need to teach your PO that you're trustworthy. He or she needs to get to know you, so he'll get enough confidence in you that he can be sure you won't run if he lets you out on probation, with or without an anklet. How can you convince your PO that you're worthy of that trust? Your freedom is ultimately up to... you!

Cathy

In my casa, Cathy is a very kind person to me and my twin brother, Jeremy. She always takes us places we like to go and we all love her very much.

I wish she could see me now and I can't wait for my birthday to come, because I am going to have a fun time.

-Jason

From The Beat: We hope you and your twin can be with Cathy on your birthday. We also hope you are out of Juvy.

I Only Saw 9/11 On TV

I wish that I could have been around when 9/11 happened, because I could say that I was there instead of saying I saw it on TV.

Also, I wish that I had a million dollars, but it's not gonna happen, just like I will never be free as long as I live in this country. I'm gonna get out and go to Europe ASAP, more specifically, Amsterdam.

This guy says I have three minutes left to write, so I'm just gonna have to hurry up and get to my point, that is if I have one.

-Muhammad

From The Beat: 9/11 was one of the heaviest tragedies that has befallen your country, Muhammad, so just being able to talk about being there may not be the point. What if you really had been in New York City or Washington, DC, when the planes crashed into the World Trade Centers and the Pentagon? What do you imagine you would have done? How could you have helped the victims? Why do you feel you can never be free as long as you live in the USA? Why do you think life in Europe will be freer for you?

Pride

My problem is my pride. My pride for my town and for respect. I get in fights, because of my pride. I get locked up because of my pride and I get hurt sometimes for my pride. I will fight someone if I feel my town is being disrespected, because I will feel disrespected.

My pride also prevents me from doing well in school, because I don't like it when people tell me what to do, so I don't do my schoolwork sometimes.

-Tip

From The Beat: Don't you think it all depends on what your priorities are, Tip, as far as your pride goes? Are you proud when you do well in school? Does it thrill you to learn things you're interested in? If you mean by "when people tell me what to do" you mean "when the teacher gives you homework assignments" how else do you expect to learn? What kind of pride do you have in your mind/imagination, which has nothing to do with your town, your homies, but only with your personal accomplishments?

I will never be free as long as I live in this country

What's Wrong

I'm a hawg boy and the block won't leave my veins
 Staff my problem thinking they punkin' you, they all lame
 Problems wit' ya boy. I'm in an' out
 Can't wait to go dumb
 Get out and make life count
 Problems not seeing my turf ones on the block
 Showing me love that ain't never gon' stop
 Problems in here, I really don't trip
 Soon I'm a be gone on top of the world
 Problem is I can't wait to be out in the free world

-The Slick One

From The Beat: If you love the free world so much, why did you sacrifice it to do whatever brought you into Juvy? Be careful of putting too much trust in anyone or any group, including your boys on the block. Remember, they have divided loyalties, like you and everyone do — to their homies and to themselves. Have your block boys come to visit you in Juvy? Have they written you? Do they help your mom out while you're inside? Do you think it might be wiser to make sure you trust yourself first before you rely on anyone else, including your family or homies?

What Am I Missing?

I am not missing nothing, but all my wants. I am healthy, I got a supporting family, and I got people who love me. Sometimes I think I am missing something, because I keep coming back to this place that I call DT.

I have a drug problem that I need help with. I need to get my past cleared up, so I can live my life. My past comes to mess with me when I am out. When I get out of here, I try to put everything I did to get put in this place in the past. Leave the past in the past.

-Kreppy Krawler

From The Beat: Can you talk to your med tech or a counselor you trust in Juvy and set up a drug program, for when you get out? There's nothing wrong with asking for help. How are you managing in Juvy without drugs? Maybe it's better to accept your past and learn to deal with whatever you've left undone, rather than try to dismiss it and leave it behind. "Past is prologue" is an old saying that means that the past influences the present and future.

Relationships

My problem has always been relationships. I always put myself in the position to get in trouble or abused. This time I have found someone who I feel is perfect for me, even though he has his imperfections.

He has helped me to overcome many of my obstacles in life, including not getting into bad relationships! I love you so much, baby.

-Jenny

From The Beat: Keep this guy, Jenny. He sounds wonderful, especially if he allows you to feel wonderful! But never forget, you need to learn to trust yourself, and not to rely on him or anyone else for your self-approval.

My Day At The Fair

I went to the fair and I went on a lot of rides and met some new girls. The thing I liked about the fair was I met new people and I saw things that I don't see every day.

-Eskinder

From The Beat: Who did you meet? What did you see that you've never seen before? Remember, your reading audience wasn't at the fair with you, so you have to fill us in on the details of what your exciting day was like!

My Life Is All Crazy

See, my life is all crazy right now. I been in and out of jail since I was thirteen, and it's been hard. I have been in all kinds of trouble. Anything you name, I been into it. I hate to admit it, but I want to go back and do it.

Sometimes my brother, I'm glad he don't follow in my bad footprints. He follows in the good ones. My trouble started when I came down here. I be wanting to blame my mom for all the trouble I be getting in, for bringing me down here from New York, but one good thing that came out of being in jail is I've seen the stuff that can happen to people and where life can take you.

I be writing songs and stuff, since I've been down here, and I sent a couple of my rhymes to BET. So, hopefully, I'll get a response soon from them. Well, that's all my life for right now, so bounce to this precious love poem that I also made down here:

Precious Love

Your eyes are like diamonds shining in the sun
 Your love is so sweet; it's like honey on a bun
 When I look at you, all I see is beauty
 And deep down inside, I know I'm a beast
 You're like queen on a real high throne
 And I'm the king who led you home
 I'm peaches, you cream; my love for you is so clean
 So come home to me
 And I'll leave your body in nothing but sweat
 'Cause that's how I do it
 Thug life, you won't regret

-J-Money

From The Beat: Do you believe in your heart that your mom is doing the best she can for your family and you by bringing y'all to the Bay area? If she's trying to raise y'all alone, it's a huge task for one parent. How can you show your mom you appreciate all her efforts on y'all behalf and help her out? Who are you writing this beautiful love poem to? She sounds lovely and wonderful. Are you sure she wants the thug life you seem to be offering her? If the thug life scares her or she rejects it for some reason, what other kind of life can you offer your precious love?

The System

The system's really messed up and I don't like it. They bust me for what I like to do, and that is art. But now I'm in here because I don't want to pay my money to them. So they're going to lock me down.

This place is like Disneyland compared to other places and the system really sucks. That's all I have to say.

-Rex

From The Beat: One man's art is another's graffiti. To paraphrase the ancient Romans, there's no accounting for taste. Did you make art on your property, or on someone else's? If someone made art on the side of your house, how would you feel about it? Bite the bullet Rex. Earn the moolah and pay your fine. If that's all it takes to shed the "system", it's worth the price. Yes?

**Never kept
secrets from my
older brother.
Loyalty always
came first.**

Interview With Manny, Jesse, Jorge, Ismael

Q: What's the worst thing about the system?

Manny: You're away from your family and loved ones.

Jesse: Being away from hinas.

Jorge: Some kids are treated as if they were adults instead of juveniles. We should be treated as juveniles all the time.

Q: What's the first thing you'd change about the system?

Manny: More showers.

Jesse: More yard time, and time out of our rooms.

Jorge: I would create more programs for us.

Ismael: That juveniles couldn't be treated as adults.

Q: Has being incarcerated changed your life?

Manny: For my betterment. It taught me a lot of knowledge about my organization.

Jesse: Better, because I've become more responsible for my behavior. I'm no longer a crybaby.

Jorge: Yes, it changes everybody's life. Changed it for the better. It's helped me realize I don't want this for the rest of my life.

Ismael: It's changed my life for better and worse. Better, because being locked up you have time to better your mind, body and soul. It also makes it worse because you realize this isn't that bad. You get used to it.

-Manny, Jesse, Jorge and Ismael

From The Beat: These are thoughtful responses to our questions. And Ismael, what do you intend to do about getting too used to the system? Why do you think the system and the people in it treat many kids like adults? In which ways do you wish to be treated like a juvenile?



Interview With Four Young Men: Manny, Ismael, Jesse, Jorge

Q: Give me a life changing experience, good or bad —

Manny: My dad always told me not to bang, but in my mind I wanted to be a better banger than he was.

Ismael: When I was seven, my dad put a pano on my head and told me I was going to be a gangster.

Jesse: When I went to Rolling Hills — that's when the banging started. I chose to get involved.

Jorge: My mom told me not to be like my dad, but I didn't follow her advice.

Q: And what happened as a result of your choices?

Manny: I'm bad, but I don't know if I'm badder than he was.

Ismael: I did what he said. I became a gangster. For once I listened to the old man.

Jesse: I'm in here. And I'm still banging.

Jorge: I ended up being like my dad — in and out of institutions. I'm kickin' it.

Q: What's next?

Manny: Pelican Bay.

Ismael: The penitentiary.

Jesse: The pen, by 24. I'm pretty sure.

Jorge: Quentin and Folsom, by 19.

Q: What you going to do when you get back to society?

Ismael: I'm gonna get a job and be productive.

Jesse: I'm gonna be on the street and put in work. I'd like to get a degree from Cabrillo College. I'd like to study criminal justice.

Jorge: I'd like to get a degree from Cabrillo College. Eventually I want to be a PO. I like history — especially the Romans. And Mexican American history.

-Manny, Jesse, Jorge and Ismael

From The Beat: We want to believe that you were putting us on when we asked you: what's next. We think your responses to the last question reflect who you really are and what you really want. Aim at high goals and you shall achieve high goals!

Me

My lifestyle wasn't accepted by many others.
Never kept secrets from my older brother.

Loyalty always came first.

My family degrades me for certain habits.

It may be my religion that they don't understand.

Many obstacles have crossed my path.

Every day my thoughts are full of wrath.

-Shane

From The Beat: Straight forward. Good writing. Where does the wrath come from? What happened? What will you do about it?

The System

The reason I don't like the system is because they give you chances, but they don't try to see the story from your side. Right now, they're not seeing it from my side. If I could change the system it would be to make it possible for them to see what it looks like from the kids' side. I really don't think they see it from our side.

Santa Cruz County is really OK. I like it. They give you a bit of a chance. They try to see it from your side as well as theirs. The Probation staff at Santa Cruz County Juvenile Hall is pretty cool, but as far as the system, I really don't like it at all. When I get out of here, I'm really not coming back.

And that's my word. I'm going to try everything in my power to stay out of here and to stay in school. I'll try to stay occupied.

-Maurice

From The Beat: If you have a clear goal and if you work hard to achieve it, the chances are very good that you will meet with success, even if the outcome is a bit different than you had imagined. Good intent and hard work is the best way we know to have a good life.

**When I get
out of here,
I'm really not
coming back.**

Interview With David

Q: What's your biggest regret?

David: Being at a party where some people got hurt. I got caught up in it. Wrong place. Wrong time.

Q: What about your greatest success?

David: I went a year and a half without drinking. I had a job, too. I was doing well. But everything slid down hill and here I am, looking at cracks in the ceiling.

Q: What's your biggest wish?

David: I want to get through court without anything going wrong and I want to be reunited with my family. Long term, I want to stay clean and free. I want to find something good to do. I want to stay occupied, and happy.

-David

From The Beat: David — you were clean once, and for a lengthy time. You can do it again. Just about anything you've done before, you can do again. So, start over. As they say — one day at a time. You stay busy by staying busy. So get busy. Work hard.

River Runs

River runs red.

So many homeboys dead.
My rhymes ain't no secret.

The wind pushes them
so you all can peep them.
The beast comes from within.
Bones break from stones.

I wish I was home
but instead I'm kickin' it
in the Hall with my folks.
In time, they'll give the word
and we'll all be free.

-Alex

From The Beat: Good job Alex. We like the idea that your rhymes are pushed by the wind. Write on.

Poetry

Poetry is my soul's desire.
Dreams make me inspired.
Night crosses the moon.
Life locked in a tomb.

A soft tune.
Sunsets late in June.

-Jesse

From The Beat: Maybe we'll be reading your poems in magazines... soon.

WILL The next batch of writings come from our friend Will aka Shaggy who wrote the following pieces when he was days away from getting released back home. We haven't heard from Will in awhile, yet we are sure maybe his teachers whom he mentions in the following letter will track him down and let him know we readers of The Beat truly appreciate his poetry and kind words. Will aka Shaggy wrote us from a correctional facility in Ohio. We do hope his life is going smooth, and he is finding success.

Dear Beat Within

Hey it's Will! Sorry I haven't written in a long while, I've been busy with school and stuff. I received my GED! I'm looking into community college or possibly attending trade school and taking up computer graphic designing. I also thought about art school.

I just love to write poetry. Poetry is my best way to free my mind. Even if what I think and feel is full of hatred and vengeance, when it's on paper it causes no harm, which keeps me clean.

I'm suppose to go home soon, I haven't been home since 2001. I'm actually scared. I'll be 20 in November, and I never held a job in my life.

I want to thank two of my teachers here, Ms. Gendron and Miss Potts. Without you two I could never have accomplished what I have. You have helped me turn my life around and shown me a positive route to a successful life and a well developed knowledge of workplace skills for a even more successful career advantage. Thank you so much, I'll never forget either of you or what you have done for me. Thank you.

Well, I'm going to end this now, here are my latest poems and I hope to hear from you all soon. I'm gone.

Fib

If I told you that I love life
I lied right to your face
The only thing I'm living for
Is the day I leave this place
I'm so damn tired of being a pawn
In "God's" sick and twisted game
I'm sick of suffering consequences
I'm done with feeling pain
Time is slowly killing me
I cannot take or give
Life seems so pointless
When you have no will to live
So now I sit all by myself
To rot away and waste
So if I told you that I love life
I lied right to your face.

Empty

I feel completely empty
Like nothing is inside
I try to think what's happened
Maybe I've finally died
I feel no motivation
No blood runs through my veins
I bet that if I'd slit my wrist
That I would feel no pain
My skin is cold and smooth
Yet a chill runs down my spine
Is this the end of my messed up life
Or a demented state of mind
Actually I don't really care
If my time on earth is through
Just promise me no tears will fall
I'd cry for none of you.

Your Eyes

Stars that shine like the biggest diamonds
The sun forever burning red with fire
Galaxy's leading to anywhere
Moon's glowing white as leprosy
Planets left undiscovered
The whole universe open to me
Waiting to be revealed
And all this I have seen
And all this I do see
When I look into your eyes.

Eternally

(Dedicated to Sabrina)

I close my eyes and visions swirl
But one remains so bright
Your beautiful eyes and dazzling smile
Makes everything seem right
You make me feel like no one has
This love I have for you
The only words to explain it all
Is that I love you true
Hopefully that means enough
To let you know it all
To assure that I'll be there to catch you
If you should ever fall
No matter what haters say to me
They won't tear us apart
I keep you and all the love I have
Inside my faithful heart
I live for you and only you
You're the one that keeps me sane
The love you've shown has revitalized my soul
And taken away my pain
Sabrina, I care for you so much
It's now just you and me
You are the only one I want
To love eternally,
I love you baby,
Love William.

MARK ANTES

It's nice to have Mark Antes back in The Beat. His short little poem speaks volumes in regards to many of us who are afraid to fail/ try something new, due to our fear of failing. Well, his contribution, "Don't Be Afraid To Fail" is pretty deep, yet simple. Mark Antes writes us these encouraging words from Deuel Vocational Institution in Tracy, CA.

Don't Be Afraid To Fail

You've failed many times, although you may not remember.
You fell down the first time you tried to walk.
You almost drowned the first time you tried to swim,
didn't you?
Did you hit the ball the first time you swung a bat?
The heavy-hitters, the ones that hit the most homeruns,
they also struck-out a lot.
Babe Ruth struck-out 1,330 times,
but he also hit 714 homeruns.
Don't worry about failure
Worry about the chances you miss when you don't even try.

LAWRENCE MCCLANE

The following piece is from a real OG who has been through plenty in his two decades of confinement. We received the following some time ago, and in his letter, writer Lawrence McClane was nearing the end of his incarceration. The following letter will give you a slight glimpse into a part of his life. Lawrence McClane writes us from the California Correctional Institution, in Tehachapi Ca.

An Excerpt From A Letter

Thank you guys for responding back to my missive. I received your letter last night. I am very interested in our young leaders, 'cause we all made many mistakes and chose a different modus-vivendi that has cost many imprisonment or death.

You asked if I am excited about my emancipation? Yes and no, 'cause I have spent almost two decades in captivity. Yes, I am institutionalized.

I also appreciate you wanting to hear my breathtaking stories and poetry. I don't mind sharing my story with the whole world, but keep in mind all of my feelings come from deep inside of me. The Beat Within will be the first to hear some of my work.

A few years ago at New Folsom State Prison Captain Walker had asked me and a few inmates/political prisoners to do a scared straight video for all the young people. I was the spokesperson for the inmates. We said we would only do the scared straight video "only" if it is "uncut." You ask what's uncut? Well, as long as we tell the truth about the California Department of Corruptions and the diabolical court systems. Captain Walker said no! Obviously CDC doesn't want us to reveal all the corruption that goes on behind these wall.

Also, I participated in two major riots at New Folsom Prison. 1989 and 1996, both riots were bloody. There was a lot of enmity among us inmates which correctional officers started. The last riot 1996 that's when Sacramento ordered all political prisoner shot callers of gangs to other prisons. My name was on the top of the list. My destination was Pelican Bay State Prison SHU (Security Housing Unit).

Hours later, 2:30am, there was a special transportation for all of us, as we inmates were fettered from ankles to belly waist fetter. There were almost fifty guards with riot gears and batons and also 37 mm rubber bullets guns hoping for one of us to get out of character.

We complied with their orders as we were loaded on the green goose. Due to our surprise we never made it to our destination PBSP, instead we visited many other prisons. Our last stop was Tehachapi where I am now.

I would like to share a poem I wrote for my best friend (my mother) who passed away three years ago. I decided to share two of my poems with you guys. I write what my heart feels at this present moment, as you can see I have a lot enmity towards this corrupt system.

Lost Souls

Lost souls of what's left of me
Like broken bones where my heart use to be
Nefarious thoughts of a scary past
This breath may be my last.

Racial guards with eyes always viewing me,
White supremacy that won't leave me be.

Animals screaming to be released,
From this cage that knows no peace.
The animal is gone, only the body is left
Like a dead man, you've walked your last step.

From the bars hangs a noose
A symbol of another victim
That couldn't break loose.

They stole his mind and raped his thoughts
They left him bare
Now his family must bury what they have lost
To a diabolical system of justice
That has no point of view
Unless
It's from the bars you see through.

Mother of Mines

Mother of Mines when you first left me
Here alone on this earth to struggle I thought
Allah was trying to stress me...

I couldn't breath from the pain that my heart felt
But deep inside my soul knew it was a test like
Cards when they're being dealt...

I couldn't help fantasizing about the taste of some hard liquor
Just swallow it whole and let cold kill the pain
quick...

But the scriptures I read kept my eyes red!
My heart bleed over every single word
that Allah said...

He said not to dread over souls missing
And that your mother is alive and you can hear her
if you stop and listen...

To the sound of your heart beat
Because every pound is the sound of your mother
so let her spirit speak...

It's kind of deep how I feel about you
If it wasn't for Allah I don't think I could've lived
without you...

I try to pray for the pain to stop
But it continues to drop like rain so I restrain
All the pain in my veins when I make Salah...

I feel my heart stop every time
I see visions of you floating inside my mind,
"Mother of Mines."

**I couldn't breath
from the pain
that my heart felt**

PATCHES, JAMES, NIZUK

We do not know too much about Patches, but we know for a fact the following pieces will give you a glimpse into the painful life he led and continues to lead from a bed in the SHU. We do hope Patches is comfortable and now satisfied that his powerful words have finally reached The Beat Within. Sorry for the delay on our end, we do hope you will be inspired to share more about your life Patches!

The Drug Dealer Game

Once a free man and then you throw it all away.
For the "lying game" called,
"do you want to be a drug dealer?"
That promises you the world.
So you believe it,
because you do not have love or friends and so on and so on!
And soon in to the game you have lots of friends and lots of
cheap sex!
And soon after you have lots of money!
And do not need approval no more!
Because you are the boss so you think you are!
You have taken people into the game with you
just like a job interview
so you can intoxicate then with your drugs
just so you can have their money and to have them eating out
of your hands
just like a little kid at a candy store!
And now sitting at the top of your game!
High on the rainbow looking down, at the halfway point!
Of the end of the game!
You start to get stupid!
Because you think you are Superman!
All at once you make a move to go to the end and fell into the
DEA's open hands!
So now your days of being a drug dealer has ended!
So see there is no pot of gold at the end of the rainbow!
Just the devil laughing at you!
So please do not be as blind as I was,
to let the devil steal your soul!!!

In My Cell

My life in my cell is no fun at all,
see I live in the prison hospital or as some know it as CTC.
I got no TV or radio in my cell
and no "gift"boxes from home!
I am a SHU inmate.
I get to shave once every month!
I am bedridden
I have one arm and one eye
and no use of 85% of my body
I have hepatitis A-B-C and I know I am dying from it!
I am okay with it
I do not ask God or anyone why me!
I am in my cell 24/7.
Most of the time I eat in bed
it is a lot of work for the RN's/ LVN's
to get me up and out of bed!
I did not get like I am to day because I am unlucky
no it is
I was not willing to see what my lifestyle was doing to me!
I have done a lot of bad things in my life
I am not happy about living in a cell with no one but you
makes one think, and I do a lot of thinking.
I have a lot of remorse for a lot of things and some days you
just do not like remembering:
I am lonely and do not get a lot of mail!
So as you can see there is no fun being lock up 24/7 in a cell
and I still have a long way to go!
So to you kids that think being a outlaw is cool think twice!
Because once you do the crime there is no going back!
And it can eat you up inside for life!
I know...
I live with the knowledge of what I did and it eats me up inside!
Or you can go to your cell by yourself and you will think a lot!

Help Our Kid's to Stay Alive

Why are there so many abused kids or kids killed out there?
And it is not because the law says it is ok to do it!
Then why?
You are asking yourself.
Let me say this much to you all out there.
It can be from alcoholism or drug abuse sometimes!
There are mothers out there having babies and putting them
right in to the garbage cans right after they gave birth!
And they say sometimes it is done because the mother did not
have the finances and/or they do not know
how to take care of a baby!
There are many of reasons why they do this!
Sometimes mom or dad will sell their babies or kids on the
black market!
And those babies and kids grow up to be slaves or used in child
sex tapes or child pornography or as a child prostitute!
And most will be killed by their 13th birthday and this is no lie!
And some parents will even sell their babies or kids out for sex
to their drug dealer.
Just to get themselves high!
Or sometimes mom or dad will molest
or even fondle their baby or kid!
Or even mom and dad together will molest or fondle their baby
and kids at the same time! Or sometimes mom or dad or even
mom and dad together will abuse their babies and kids to the
point of death or even causing brain damage.
Sometimes even killing them sometimes and this is not a lie!
It is said that several kids are killed a day
by the hands of their parents,
every day!
I am so deeply disturbed and sick to my stomach
that people and parents can be so twisted and sick in the head.
To do these things to babies and kids,
with no guilt or with no remorse,
it's just sick!
I do not see how any one who did this lives with themselves.
Or can sleep at night or even eat!
Let me say this to all
the sick disturbed twisted monsters out there
you deserve all and beyond what the law can give you!
Babies and kids need a strong foundation to grow up on!
Because they are tomorrow's generation of pioneers!
And we as people and parents need to give them all the right
tools to learn on!
Love and care and respect and completion are the most
important things you can give
to your children and to all the children out there that has
survive through this kind of abuse or any kind of abuse.
My heart goes out to you!
May you all stay strong and live a good and happy life.
God be with you!

Beat

I just got your publication, thank you, I hope to still get more of
your publications mailed to me.
Most of my writings are about my life or just life. So here is
one about my life called "The Drug Dealer Game, one about life
called "Help Our Kids To Stay Alive" So I hope you all like them. I
have a lot more of them too.
BY the way, I am 41 years old. I am in prison for conspiracy to
commit murder and putting out bounties and street terrorism and
criminal street gang activity and lots more. I gave you this much
so you know why I am in prison.
In truth I am good people. I have been with the same gang for
over twenty years, yet I have lost a lot. I am now bed ridden with
one arm and one eye. My thinking is OK most of the time. I am sick
and dying. I have Hepatitis A, B, and C. I have good and bad days,
yet I am OK with it most of the time so do not feel sorry for me.
With that said, I am leaving you with a piece about my
cell life as a dying man.
Thank you for your time.

KID There's a new Kid on the block, and we welcome him with a space in The Beat Within. Yet another writer was moved by the paper to pick up a pencil and share some wisdom. This writer read The Beat from the Santa Clara County Jail in San Jose Ca. He writes the following with the hope of directing our young readers in a different/better direction other than incarceration, as he sits in the adult system facing a life behind bars.

Wake Up!

The body does what the mind says. My mind said attack, so I did. Now I face life in prison.

The younger generation out there today are becoming more violent everyday. I'm not gonna sit and preach to anyone. I am simply going to voice my opinion.

In all the Juvenile facilities that I have been incarcerated in, a lot of hate is present. Hate can only get an individual certain places... prison or death.

I've learned the hard way. I sit in my cell for 47 hours every two days. I go everywhere in shackles.

I want to let these youth know who think they have something to prove to the world, they don't. There are opportunities out there for a lot of you. I understand that it is hard, but who said life and success were easy.

A good friend once told me, "If you're not going to live for what's right, why live at all?" I did not listen and now at the age of 18, I face life. You don't think about some things until something like this happens to you, but I just wanted to say to those of you who are going to, or are being given another chance in the eyes of the system, think before you act. Make a better life while you have the chance because the next time, you may not be as lucky.

I want to send my utmost love and respect to all fighting to better themselves. To all my carnals, thanks for all the help and love y'all send.

I also want to thank The Beat for the opportunity to shed some knowledge to the younger readers. Gracias.

Hey Beat

What's up? I was sitting here reading some of the things some of the older generation was writing and it made me think a little bit, so I decided to write a little something so maybe I can enlighten some of the younger generation. Maybe after they read this, they will change...

STEVEN NARY

We welcome yet another new writer in Steven Nary who delivers a couple poems from Pleasant Valley State Prison in Coalinga, CA. He too is someone we do not know too much about, maybe down the road we'll learn more, yet we do know he wants to touch lives through his writings so read on...

Poem #2

Hell within these cells
Every soul dwells
Minds chained
No longer free
Dreams bleed
No realization until
Your eyes see
Every criminal known to man
Every crime times ten
Stabbings
Day or night
Lifelong impression on sight
Racial pride
Riots, fists to fly
No time to cry
Who really wants this life
Not you
Not I

Dear Beat Within

I recently read about your service in a prison resource directory. I was impressed by the opportunity to educate those inside and outside these walls of the reality of prison.

I would love to receive a free subscription of your publication, You mention donations, so do you accept stamps?

I will also include a poem with this letter, if you feel it's appropriate then please use it.

Poem #1

I wish I was free
Like the all year round breeze
The thought of being free
Is not so hard to believe
The sight of being free
Can only come as a tease
But the mind being free
That is only up to me
When the mind is free
We can venture from sea to sea
From sea to sea
We see all those things that makes us free
Thanking God as we fall to our knees
For a precious gift that sets us free
Turmoil and hardships will always be
Never can we close that door
Free when we wish to be free.

I am currently incarcerated and I have seen this prison go from a relaxed state to a war zone. I am gathering information of positive change and influence so that I can help myself as well as others.

**When the
mind is free
We can
venture from
sea to sea**

**I have seen
this prison
go from
a relaxed
state to a
war zone.**

MICHAEL J. KRANENBURG

The following poem is from first time contributor Michael J. Kranenburg who writes us this thoughtful poem from, we assume, the county jail in Telluride, Colorado. We do not know too much about this writer, but we are honored that he was moved to share a little of his talents with us. Lets hope he tries us again down the road.

(Metaphor of Life) Skipping Stones

we're all just stones that lay by a stream,
some brown, blue, gray, or green,
all these different shapes and sizes, so what does it mean?
hidden inside we're all special artists waiting to fulfill our dreams
for we all have unique talents, mine may differ from yours
what kind of stone do you look for when you stand at the shores?
most look for a flat stone, one that will sail far
a true artist has no concern for shape, size, or color of the stone
it's who's holding it and how it was thrown
so we're all magically special stones lying by streams,
picking one another up and down fulfilling each other's dreams.
so as we flow down the river of life not known where your going.
dig deep down inside yourself and keep the mystery flowing!

My Outlet

My name is Michael. I was given this address by a friend. I would like any information available about your organization.

I have very little to read and I enjoy the arts and writing. Since being in jail for the last six months I have no inlet or outlet for creativity. I find this place negative and gloomy and a challenge to write at all. I'd love to learn more about you...

**what kind of stone do you look for when
you stand at the shores?
most look for a flat stone, one that will sail far**

JASON FRANKS

Continuing his role as teacher, Jason Franks — Orphan — analyzes and critiques the pressures all of us face to "fit in," and how damaging that pressure can be. Writing from the Corcoran SHU, Orphan's time is "winding down." Banging for more than ten years, he has now made the difficult choice to drop out of the gang and move his life in a new

Fitting In

The pursuit of acceptance is as much an enigma as an oxymoron. In this chase of an intangible, we'll concentrate every fiber of our being, and get to where we're willing to mortgage our character, morals, and ethics — even the idiosyncrasies that make us individuals. We can get so consumed in the end, we are really a mere shell of our true persona, the anti-thesis of who we really are.

Even early on, fitting in is pressed on us in many various and subtle ways. As infants while developing hand-eye coordination, we learned a square block didn't fit in the round hole. We were rewarded with loving and attention. In pre-school, we're taught to color inside the lines. The reward: a gold star or a place on the bulletin board or the coveted refrigerator at home. We share our toys or suffer a time out (removal from our peers). No different than Pavlov's Dog, really. In fact, our entire childhood is about classical conditioning. Not till middle or high school does fitting in become an issue or goal.

It's at this point that the game changes. "The rules" are bent or shredded by just a handful. The consequences are a far cry from a mere time out. Social ostracism should be recognized as cruel and unusual punishment. At this age, kids become aware of socio-economics, status, and the perception of privilege.

This continues through high school. Being a standout in sports or academia can often skirt the status quo criteria of label, language, and behavior. Psychologists and sociologists often refer to the social hierarchy as an important arena for social interaction and maturation. There are many flaws to the commonly-subscribed-to rank and file. Teasing, harassment, and blatant bullying perpetuates passive aggression, low-self esteem and depression in the outsiders.

Some find comfort in smaller, less demanding cliques. Others, a very few, use the mistreatment as incentive to excel for opportunities of retribution in adulthood. Some find comfort and acceptance in a circle that suppresses the emotional trauma in substance abuse, or gang violence or a culmination of both.

In college, or in our twenties, individualism becomes semi in-vogue. Oftentimes, that acceptance or ability to fit in is squandered in addiction. This road inevitably heads to failure, madness, depression, death, or worse, prison. Upon entering the world of drug dealing and other felonious activities to support a habit or in search of instant gratification, prison presents itself as the next arena. There you have to find a way to fit in too. Often the individual is seen as easy prey for the group. The ramifications of being a loner can be costly all the way around.

"Fitting In" in prison can be easy with a mask of a racist and the willingness to hurt other people warranted or not. While wearing this mask, you're kharmically, poetically, or maybe justly indebted to lose part of your soul. But you will be down for yours and your race.

But it is in the mirror you are an unrecognizable shell who sold out to fit in and survive. The philosopher Steiner said, "A handful of might is far greater than a whole bag of right." While this can be a safe modus operandi, the cost is greater than the prize of fitting in, being feared and commanding respect.

Parole doesn't end the cycle. Now one must fit in against even greater odds. With serious consideration to this cycle, one becomes aware how "fitting in" is as much an oxymoron as jumbo shrimp or an honest politician. Not to mention an RSVP to psychosis.

THOMAS SANDERS

Thomas Sanders, aka White Out, as he writes, used to be an excellent workshop participant and writer in Santa Clara County Juvenile Hall. Unfortunately, he made enough mistakes for the system to jump on him, so now he's in CYA's DeWitt Nelson in Stockton, California. We hope you can all hear and feel what he writes about CYA in this piece, and although he knocks it, his poetry is still compelling and powerful. We hope he finds some of the healing he's looking for, and we look forward to hearing from him again soon.

Dear Beat

How is all? It's me Thomas Sanders aka White Out from Santa Clara County. I also used to write as Sublime some years back. Well, let me tell you what's been up with me. First off, I left the Hall on Dec.3, 2003 just a few months ago. I'm here in CYA at the DeWitt Nelson Youth Correctional Facility in Stockton next door to Chad, OH Close and Karl Holton. NRCC shut down and I was just about to be sent to Preston YCF when I turned 18, so I got a trip over here. I am supposed to be doing 18 months, but I have already caught four on top of that for some dirt I did.

For those in the Hall about to be sent to anything besides CYA, take advantage of it. CYA is nothing but drama, drugs, and violence. Therapy is a joke here if you're even lucky enough to get it. If you come, you will become worse of a person, at least mentally, it is unavoidable. I do not care about what anyone has to say about it; I've been here for only three almost four months, and I can already feel my motivation slipping.

The belief in myself or other people has all but faded. Do you now how scary that is to me? I don't want to live my life this way, but here there is no help. If you find it, it will not last because your mind is on survival, not what the games you are forced to play are doing to your soul.

Please don't go my way my fellow youth. I was like many of you in the system, mainly for family problems from the gate. I was first sent to group homes, three to be exact, and then YA alternative. I ran away and was caught, so they sent me to CYA. My charges were: misdemeanor battery, terrorist threat (I told my brother I'd cut his balls off at 14), violations, under the influence and possession of meth, a misdemeanor, and what they sent me here for, 1st degree residential burglary of my own house.

Some may laugh at my crimes, but take a minute and think, once they give up on you, you are screwed. The court gave up on me and look where I am, all alone with no help. The Hall's "therapy" and counseling is ten times the better than here. Get help while you can. I am a guy who can make something of myself, college, family, the whole nine yards, but right now I'm having doubts about the future, because of the doubts I'm having now. Well, my poetry is not up to par or my real self, which is understandable considering the circumstances, but hey, you know I still got to write. Well, to all the homies at The Beat and the Hall stay up. Forever stay true to yourself if no one else.

And How

I was never made to be set on fire,
I was never made to be desired.
And how I still doubt your motives,
And how I still feel alone,
Not because I was born broken
Because of love unknown.

Afflictions Of A Horrible Disease

Afraid to meet the end
Can I graduate, will I ever succeed?
The task is at hand, but bridges are burnt
So deep is this fear that cripples me
Prescribe myself some despair
Take away knowledge of the stress everywhere
Bite my lip, close my eyes
I'm getting ready to jump
Almost made it this time
Still I fall, it's no surprise
My heart hurts.

Papa

Old Mr. Grandpa, give me advice
How do you go on?
Go on when you've lost your will to fight
How does one lose control of his footsteps
Walking on fire and red hot coals
To still live without regret
Old Mr. Grandpa, come tell me this
Why do I go on?
Go on when I pray for death
How does one seeking a brighter day
Find him self soaked and cold
In the pouring rain?
Old Mr. Grandpa, am I your friend?
How do you fix a heart
With a heart that won't mend?
How can I stay here,
Stay and do what is right?
Old Mr. Grandpa, give me advice.

How does one seeking a brighter day Find him self soaked and cold

Kiss Softly

Take the pill and wash it down with the rain
Find the switch to fill this room of pain
Burn all the pictures on the wall
And don't try too hard to solve
The answer in black and white
There is a grey when I look into your eyes
Kiss softly, these wound are mine
Remind me of all the good old times
Growing apart demands
To call yourself a man
I am still bleeding I
Screaming out God, why?
Kiss softly these scars of mine
Don't remind me of lost old times
And I am losing my motivation
Can't find love with hate contemplations
So kiss softly, these doubts are mine
Remind me, we'll make our own times
Help me heal, this life kiss softly.

CHRISTOPHER COTTON

Well, the following thoughtful piece about CYA and the life that may take you there was written by Christopher Cotton. Unfortunately, we don't know anything about this young man but what he tells us in his piece because he his letter came in the same envelope as that sent by Thomas Sanders. We hope to hear from him again. Chris writes us from CYA's DeWitt Nelson in Stockton, CA.

To Whom This May Concern:

I thought I would take a moment and sit down and write a few lines to my fellow youth out there. My name is Chris Cotton and I'm 18 years old. I am in CYA at the moment. I'm not going to state why I'm here, but they gave me 8 years at court. Luckily, my jurisdiction is up on my 21st birthday so I'll get out, free Aug 2, 06.

I'm sure a lot of my youth out there are just like myself, caught up in the fast life, in drugs, sex, parties, and the adrenaline rush of breaking the law. And those people out there (just like myself) will continue to do the same things but just be smarter about how we go about it. Because let's face it, drugs are what we use to feel more like ourselves and what we use to get away from the pain our childhood brought us and we still continue to suffer from. The fact is we are used to being treated like shhh. Used to being molested, raped, physically abused, emotionally abused, and belittled, so we continue to draw the same negativity because we're scared to face change, and we know the outcome of the negativity, so we tend to draw that to ourselves.

I just want to say that I believe it's okay to do that if you can handle the consequences.

See here, being locked up is a whole 'nother world beyond your comprehension. I mean YA is what you make of it. For some people, they take advantage of the programs and actually better themselves. But most of us just spend our time thinking of what we're gonna do when we get out and how to be smarter at what we do.

In CYA, you have only limited options, either snitch, do bad, or do a little bit of both. This institution isn't all that bad if your mind is strong, but in other institutions you have no rights. I know you hear the investigations on Chad and all the drama that goes on inside these fences. They stuff they assume is real.

So I just want to say that before you chose to go out and do all that stuff, are you willing to pay the consequences for your actions? And if you are, then so be it. But remember for that split second before you make the decision to do it, is it worth you losing your freedom and everything you've ever known with it? I hope this touches a place. I send my love and respect for those who struggle just like me.

ISRAEL PEREZ

Our old friend, Israel Perez, manages to capture the essence of long-term confinement better than most writers we've ever read. In this sad piece, he describes the effects on him as a cancer that has burrowed into his soul so that he will never be free of it, even when he is free of the physical confinement. Prison, he writes, squeezes you down until your focus is tiny — a bag of chips, a couple of dollars. And all the while, he waits in his SHU cell at Corcoran State Prison for that letter from home — the one that might sustain him for another day, the one that will never come.

I Can See

Sometimes when my mind is emerging from a rare afternoon nap, and fragments of fantasies are frantically scurrying for a place to hide, I can see my situation as it truly exists. All of the logic rationalizing my prison existence gets tangled up with the retreating fantasies, and for several fleeting seconds my eyes become privy to the madness swirling in and around my cell.

I can see the madness that has stealthily crept beneath my skin into the very fibers of my flesh, where, like a cancer, it has grown, spread and burrowed. I can see how it has been festering in an angry inflammation, so that nearly all I hear is madness, all that I see is madness, all that spews forth from my mouth is madness.

During these unexpected moments of clarity, I can see exactly where the prison's chisel has been diligently hard at work. Where my disfigured features have become more unrecognizable with each bite of the metal's sharp edge. Where whole areas have been slowly chipped away bit by bit, leaving only a slight resemblance of my former self, leaving countless pieces of me scattered throughout this vast prison complex I'm lost in.

Embarrassingly, I can see how my imprisoned mind now thinks on a terribly small scale. Perceiving several dollars as a significant amount of money. Waiting with impatient desire for the monthly canteen to be issued. Meager bags of snacks nobody in society pays much attention to, but here I find myself coveting them.

I can see myself spending a good portion of my days overly concerned with even the most miniscule of moves made by the guards and prisoners. Watching them glide from shadow to shadow on lazy vulture wings, listening to them conspire in the laughing language of hyenas.

With dismay, I can see myself foolishly waiting for that letter from home which will never arrive. Searching the stack of mail in the guard's hands with the lightning speed of a grocery store scanner. And on each day that fails to bring the much needed letter, I can see my heart foolishly being set on the next working

day.

From the back of my darkened cell I can see just how backwards my captive world has become. How with even a million reincarnations, the malignant prison tumor can never fully be cut from my spirit. That onto any paradise island I step, prison will be dragged along with me. Into the finest restaurants, loudest nightclubs, most meaningful relationships, my experience behind bars will be there like choking dust settling upon everything I come in contact with.

There will be no birthday parties without my recalling all the ones I celebrated with foul tasting inmate made alcohol on my tongue. No observing rational political debates, without remembering all the riots that erupted over the most trivial of matters. And never again will I meet another man without wondering what group of people he associates with, what city he's from, what gang he claims.

Out of the corner of my tired eyes. I can see the raging violence bubbling just beneath my calm surface. Bubbling up even as I try to convince myself and the others that I've rehabilitated myself. Fixed myself despite the percolator of violence I've been trapped in for what seems life eternity. I can see myself nodding along with the hopes and dreams floating like ghosts in the back of my mind; phantom house, car, job, family, real life.

Then I can see the guard walk past my cell, skeleton keys clinking against his worn metal baton. In his hands a stack of letters, but not a one with my family name on it. Not a one that will bring me up-to-date, making the last eight years vanish.

In a flash boil, I can see how much I hate my family, detest them with a venom that seems unequal in all the world. Hate them for never taking five minutes to write on the back of a postcard. Hate them for never spending the thirty-seven cents it would cost to get in contact with me. Hate them 'til I realize it's hurt love I feel.

Sometimes when my mind is emerging from a rare afternoon nap, and fragments of fantasies are frantically scurrying for a place to hide, I can see.

MONTHLY OFFENDER

Again, those special youngsters who pour their souls out in the Monthly Offender, are gracing the pages of The Beat Within. Staff at the Whatcom County Juvenile Detention Center (Washington State) should take great pride in this publication, put together with almost no budget at all. In this issue, we bring you only five outstanding pieces (because our budget, too, is squeezed to the max).

Just Keepin' It Real

We all dream of life outta the game,
And those in the big noose one did the same.
I'm dong hard time but I can get out,
I'm don't gotta sit here just cryin' about.
I've had some hard times but I know I can change.
'Cause this b-s gets old and it's always the same.
In and out of juvi the past few years of my life,
Doin' like you all do, cryin' about my strife.
At the point in life we gotta all suck it up,
Stop talking and start doin', stop letting our lives erupt.
Sure it will be hard but your hard ass is right
You're a rider to the fullest ready to give up your life.
When it comes to the homies you're down for whatever,
But if you're reading this obviously you ain't too clever.
Because that just means you're caught up in a game you wont win
Drinkin', druggin', doing crimes, a life full of sin.
I ain't tryin' to clown, I just wanna let you know,
I've been there before, I know this life blows.
At some point you'll surrender, at some point you'll see,
Unless livin' in this man-made hell is where you wanna be.
I got hit up with two years for being stupid in the streets,
Hell, even this Krazy Princess eventually got beat.
Do you realize how dumb you actually get hooked.
But you're big boys and girls and you all have the choice.
The one I made is from my heart which is a loving voice.
That only wants to help those in need,
That longs and yearns for my fellow outlaws to see,
You're worth so much more than a life that blows
If you'll get real with yourself, deep down you'll know.
I must leave this note with a fact of truth,
No matter what you've down, the lord will always love you.

-Jeannie F.

I Need To Change

Shot at, stabbed and jumped,
Yet still I'm on da grind,
Catchin' charges I didn't do
Puts revenge on my mind.

Stomped, sliced and choked
'Til I could hardly breathe,
Gets me to thinking why
I'm in the game and can't leave.

A family, friends, a girl that makes me smile
All tell me I should change,
But year after year it's harder
To put down all these chains.

Drunken days and drug filled nights
Put me from couch to couch,
Until I get locked up again
And start prayin' for the outs.

Livin' my life this way
Is killin' my soul,
Makin' everything I know
In my life grow cold.

I wanna change, I wanna so bad,
This time I really lost too much,
Family, friends and Sophia
God, how I miss her touch.

-Bobby A.

My Parents

Starting with my father, there is no story. He beat my mom and me and my brother. In my mind he is nothing but a sperm donor.

My mother, on the other hand, has stood by me through thick and thin. Don't get me wrong, she's an irresponsible drunk who spends more money on tequila than food, but hey, she's my mom and I love her. I actually think she deserved it, though.

She worked her ass off to support two kids by herself. She was never home and my brother basically raised me. She worked her ass off for fifteen years, so I believe she has a right to be a drunk. I mean, it's not like I can't take care of myself.

So, all in all, I love my mom. She may be a drunk, but she's my mom.

-Jordan S.

Ashley

I don't even know who you are.
I could be looking at you looking at me
From across the bar
And never even realize it because
I don't even know who you are.
We've never met, never spoken.
I've only dreamt of you and read about
How tragically your heart has been broken.
And yet I feel as though I've know you
For my entire life.
What is this bond that we share?
Is it lyrical, or something else entirely?
Why would I even bother to care
About the fact that I still don't
Even know who you are?
I could continue, but there's nothing to say.
I never really meant to say any of this,
I only intended to convey
This thought that plagues my mind;
I don't even know who you are.

-Brian L.

Truth

Lightin' the light
Preparin' to get high as a kite,
Putting that flame under the pipe,
Watchin' the rock sizzle
As it melts into a puddle in the middle
Clearing you lungs getting ready for the thizzle
Lickin' yo' lips as you out them into the tip of the kit
Rollin as you blow it
In my heart the process is an art
Blowin' out a cloud to make all the homies proud,
Crystallization-a ritual that is critical,
Realizin' not, the cost that's lost
You're being deceived 'cause you're so naïve.
Not knowin' that the clouds you blowin'
Is containing your soul and throwin' it on the coals
Until the day you lay on the floor shakin' and quaking
You're heart racin' as your facin the punctuality of reality
You hit it and bit it you couldn't quite kick it always gonna quit
But without the dope you just couldn't cope
Now your mom cries as she says her goodbyes
All because you wanted to get high.

-Coleen C.

SIR TURTLE

This week, Sir Turtle, who writes to us from the SHU in Corcoran State Prison, drops us part three of his epic called "My Life." He states that although some of this may seem unreal to the readers, it is all non-fiction — true. We hope you enjoy reading Part Three. Look forward to Part Four soon.

My Life (Part Three)

Well, he took us up to Oregon to the mall to go shopping and that's where I started to steal music tapes, CD's, candy and jewelry and whatever I could get my hands on. Every time we would go up there I would do the same thing over and over and never got caught for it.

On the way back from Oregon my mom would hear me eating the candy, and she would ask me what I am doing? I would tell her that "I am opening some candy bars that I bought with the money you gave me." She would say OK. There are times when I remember going camping on the weekend and we went fishing, and swimming in some cold ass water. I had to sleep in the van with my mom, her fiancé and his dog. I slept on the floor of the van and what sucked was worrying about the dog's fleas and his bad, bad dog breath in my face all night long.

Well on the day we were going to leave and go home, I grabbed my fishing pole to try my luck on catching me a fish. I was about to give up until I felt a tug on my line and sure enough I caught a big fish and reeled it in, so I can have my mom cooked it for me. I had to gut it, chop off it's head, tail, and fins, before I could have it cooked. I knew how to gut it because my uncles use to take me fishing to the canals over by Huron, California.

So I went to my mom and showed her my catch and asked her if she could cook it for me so I could eat it and she said yes. I said thank you. After it was done cooking I started to eat it, but I had to watch out for the bones, as well, and after I was done I threw it in the fire place until my mom's fiancé slapped me upside the head and then I was told to pick up the fish and take it across the road to be put in the trash can.

We had some neighbors across the creek from us and they heard my mom tell her fiancé to stop hittin' me, but he wouldn't listen thinking he would teach me a lesson. Well I got fed up on the hits he was giving me so I turned around and started swinging my fist on him and I got a lucky shot and knocked his glasses off his face. Well, my mom called me to go over to her and when I turned around to leave, in the middle of the road, he socked me in the back of the head and my lower back that made me fall to the ground holding my lower back. The neighbors from across the creek came to my rescue from an ass beating and I had to be carried to their campsite.

They ask my mom if her fiancé was my father and she said no, and I found out that my neighbor's dad was a cop and he told my mom's fiancé that if he ever lay a hand on me, he will put my mom's fiancé in jail. Well my mom came over and tried to get me to go home with her and I told her no, 'cause I'm tired of him beating me up 'cause he doesn't have the right to hit me, since he is not my dad. The neighbors told me that they heard the arguments and the fighting that was going on and they said that I will be going home with them and stay at their house, so they can call someone at the Juvenile Hall to come and pick me up. They saw how much pain I was in, from the hit on my lower back and had to be carried to their truck and be made comfortable.

Well we get back to Mount Shasta and to these people's house and had to have them get a wheel chair for me, so they can push me inside. Once inside I got put on the couch and fell fast asleep, while the man of the house explains to the rest of the family why I was there. Then he calls the Juvenile Hall and asked for someone to come and pick me up and when that person would get there they will explain more to them.

Well, this lady comes by herself to pick me up and to make the long trip back to the Juvenile Hall. But first

these kind, caring and loveable people told her what happened to me and why I needed to go to the Juvenile Hall, and I gave those people's my mom's phone number so they can call her and let her know where I'll be. Well, I walk to the car with a little help from their daughters and they say that they will write me some letters to see how I'm doing and that they will come and visit me as well, and I told them thank you for all that you have done and that I don't think I could ever repay you for what you did.

Well as soon as we start to leave she ask me if I would like something to eat and I said that would be nice, so we get some hamburgers, fries, and a chocolate milkshake. Then we started for the Juvenile Hall in the town called Yreka and she starts telling me what's it like there. She sees that I'm getting sleepy and she tells me to go to sleep and that she will wake me up when we get there. Well I lay my head down on her lap and she starts to stroke my hair until I fell asleep. As I was sleeping I kept having flashbacks of the fight that I had with my mom's fiancé. Then she tells me to wake up 'cause we're almost there, but I can't see nothing 'cause it's so dark and I put my head back down on her thigh until we got to the Juvenile Hall. Well she says we are here and let's go inside and meet the staff.

The lady that drove me to the Juvenile Hall was named Dianna, and she tells them what happened and why I'm here and they said ok, let's get you booked, fingerprinted, take your picture and give you some Juvenile clothes and we will put yours in a locker with a lock on it. They asked her if I had eaten and she said no, 'cause there wasn't enough time. But she and I knew that we had some food and she gave me that look that said I won't say nothing if you don't. After my booking into the Hall, changed clothes, they gave me my bedding, a couple of magazines and books to read. Then this nice lady named Becky told me to follow her and she will show me where I will be staying and sleeping for my stay in the Hall. She said that she will be back with some food for me to eat and when she came back she had my tray stacked up with a lot of food, 'cause it looked like my food would fall off the tray.

I had about seven hamburger patties with the bread, a whole bunch of fries and six fat, fat pieces of deep rich chocolate cake that tasted hecka good. And when Becky came back for my tray she saw that the tray was completely clean and she said that I must have had been hungry and I said I was. I had stashed away three hamburgers and bread and some cake for my late night snack when I wake up in the middle of the night.

I ain't going to lie, but when I first stepped into the Hall I was so scared that I stayed in my room and didn't come out, until one of the lady staff named Karen came down to my room to talk to me. She unlocked my door gave me my pants to put on 'cause when they locked us in we have to give them our pants. After I put them on she asked me if it's clear and I said yes it is, and she came in and sat down on my bed to talked to me about the program here at the Juvenile Hall. She looked soooo good and sexy that I didn't think of the consequences as I laid my head in her lap and told her why I'm here and after that we became hella close. If I need to talk to someone just to ask for her and she will come down and talk to me.

Well, I came out and was surprised at what this Juvenile Hall had. We had tons of board games, books, pool table, and a good size TV as well. Mrs. Sherman introduced me to the staff and to my surprise the staff was hella cool and the cook Mr. Jenkins also told me that he lets one of us help him cook breakfast, lunch, and dinner. I met some friends in there that I knew from the streets and made some more friends as well. We also had to go to school during the morning, we

don't come back, 'cause if you do I'm going to bend you over my knee and spank you and I said you were so kind to me while I was here, so I'll try to stay out there ok.

SIR TURTLE (CONT.)

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did our schoolwork and when we were done we could either get on the computer or the teacher would show us how to make colored bracelets and PE was also mandatory. We also had some girls there too, everything about Juvenile Hall was cool, but I was there for only about 5 days until my PO called my mom and told her to come down to see if I wanted to go home with her.

Well my mom gets to the Hall and they start to talk and then my PO ask me if I would like to go home and I said, hell yeah I want to go home so I can sleep in my own bed. My PO told me to behave when I go home and I said yes sir, then I went back inside to change my clothes so I could leave. While I was changing Mrs. Sherman came over to me and had tears in her eyes and told me to be good out there and don't come back, 'cause if you do I'm going to bend you over my knee and spank you and I said you were so kind to me while I was here, so I'll try to stay out there ok.

Well, me and my mom stopped to get something to eat and she told me that when we get home just go straight to your room and shut the door and I said, yes mom. Well everything was cool for about 2 weeks until me and mom's fiancé got into an argument and we started throwing blow for blow and I told him that if he hits me hard I'm going to hit him twice as hard and he was surprised on these power hits that I gave him and made him stumble back a little. He just got madder and madder and we went toe to toe and that's when I seen my mom crying and on the phone calling the police on me. Well when the sheriff got there I sat down in the chair and told him if I go, the chair goes, well he and my mom's fiancée got me out of the chair and I swung my fist on the sheriff and connected on his jaw.

He told me that he was not going to press any charges on me for socking him on the jaw, 'cause he got kids of his own. Well I get to the Juvenile Hall and I stay there for a week and a half and when Mrs. Sherman saw me she walked up to me and slapped me upside the head and told me that we will talk later in your room and I'm like sure, whatever you say. Well later that night Mrs. Sherman came to my room and unlocked my door, walked in my room and sat on my bed and asked me what happened, so I told her what went down and she told me, poor baby.

At the end of the week my mom came to pick me once again. Me and my mom went home and she told me the same thing she told me the last time, I also found out that my mom's fiancée went to jail for one day and I had to go to the Hall for a week. That was the first time my mom ever called the cops on me.

Well in the year of 1986, we went down to Fresno so my mom could get married to her fiancé and be surrounded by family. The wedding was going to take place at my Aunt Becky's house and all my family was there and my mom's fiancé was there also and everybody got to know each other.

When we got to my aunt's house, they put me in the room with my cousin Isabel and her friend Monica and I slept on the floor, and me and Isabel started asking each other what have we've been up to. Well I told my cousin Isabel and her friend what's been happening with me up in Mount Shasta and they were like damn, you got it bad and I told them I ain't tripping at all. I also told them that my mom's fiancé is also in the wrong for hitting me 'cause I'm not his son. We stayed up all night long just talking and then we all said good night 'cause tomorrow is a big day for my mom.

I couldn't go to sleep 'cause I kept having these old ass dreams from back in the Indian days and I woke up screaming and full of sweat. My aunt came to Isabel's room and asked what is wrong and I told her just a bad dream and one that I don't think anybody in my family can tell me what it means.

Well the big day begins for my mom. But I go outside and kick back with my godfather and uncles and watch them drink and joke around until they ask me why I ain't inside for my

mom's wedding and I tell that I didn't want to be there. So they called Isabel and her friend Monica to come and get me and to take me back inside for the wedding. Everybody was ready for the wedding, but couldn't start until my mom asked me if she could get married to the man that she loved and I seen the tears in my mom's eyes as she said please.

Before the wedding could take place I told my mom in front of everybody that I will listen to her and only her, 'cause she's my mother and father, and that I love her with all my heart and soul, and then I gave her a hug and said let's start this wedding. Well, I could tell that my mom was very happy with her new husband and after the wedding I stayed at my aunt's house so my mom and her new husband could go on their 2 week little honey moon. As for this 12 year old boy I got my grub on all the food and went outside with my uncles and got drunk with them and they didn't trip that I was drinking beer with them, it's just that everybody was happy that my mom got married.

When I got way too drunk I walked inside my aunt's house and walked to Isabel's room, but before I went in I went to the restroom to take a piss, then went back to Isabel's room and walked in and seen that they were asleep on the bed, and I climbed up on the bed with them and passed out cold. They didn't care and they knew that they will never move me 'cause I was way too drunk, so they went back to sleep. Then when my mom and her husband came back to pick me up to go back to Mount Shasta, I woke up with a killer hang over and I asked Isabel and Monica what happened, and they said I got hecca drunk with my uncles.

Well we went back up to Mount Shasta and got into more and more fights up there every single day, but I never stopped studying what I've been taught on the secrets of martial arts and kick boxing, because, because Johnny, and his sister Sophia was allowed to come up and visit me and that's when they start showing and teaching me more on what Master Chung had taught them and now they were teaching me. So we took Sophia and Johnny back to Fresno and I had gotten into some martial arts and kickboxing tournaments and I got some trophies as well.

We was also down in Fresno for my birthday and I turned 13 years old in the year of 1987 and my uncles found out by me that my mom's husband was hitting me, and my uncles told him that if he ever lay a hand on me again, then they will kick his butt and they also told him that he didn't have the right to be hitting me 'cause I was not his son. We went back to Mount Shasta and I got me a summer job washing dishes, but at least I was making money the right way. My boss was fine ass woman and it was only me, her and two other fine ass white woman where I worked at. Every time I got done with my job my boss and the other two ladies would give me a hug and my mind would start wondering about sexual things with them. But they treated me like a little brother there.

At times I would be kicking back in front of my pad I would just sit on my low rider bike cleaning it. Me and my neighbor was in the process of making a good size speaker box for some tunes and putting a car stereo mounted in between the handle bars, but it started to rain so I had to put it away. I got chased by some dude that thought he was bad and he stopped his car 'cause I told him what you looking at punk? He got out of his car with a baseball bat and started to chase me saying that he was going to kill me but he never caught me 'cause I was always too quick for him.

Then I got into trouble with the cops for grabbing my girlfriends mom's ass and she called the cops on me for that, but look at it this way I was an outsider to that town and she was a white woman with white cops. I had to apologize to her for grabbing her butt and she didn't press any charges on me at all. Me my mom and my step-dad all went back up to Oregon to do some school shopping and buying some groceries and I went back to stealing again, but this time I started to steal

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SIR TURTLE (CONT.)



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some jewelry and in order to do that I had to put up the 'hood of my sweatshirt so they couldn't see my face. On the way back home everything was cool and when we got to the house we had already moved to a better house and I went to my room, and as for me not thinking about locking my door, my mom walked in with my school clothes and seen the stolen jewelry I had on my bed, and she said I'm calling the cops.

When she did that I picked up the stolen jewelry and broke my little piggy bank that had me some money in it and took off. I ended up at my friend's house and showed his mom the stolen jewelry that I had and told her that I had to get rid of it. She took it out of my hands and started to put her fingerprints all over the stolen jewelry and I told her that I'm running away from home as well. She said I could stay here for a while and I said thank you.

I went to go visit my girlfriend Regina and to be with her one more time before I left Mount Shasta for good. Well we had sex without protection and two weeks before me and my two white friends were going to leave to go to Riverside and stop at Fresno, she told me that she was pregnant from me, and then she left me and my two friends found a truck with the keys in it and we got in it and took off on the freeway without telling our families anything. We almost got lost in downtown Sacramento, plus we had to stop to fill up the trucks two gas tanks and we didn't even pay for the gas neither, we just took off. Well we made it all the way down to Stockton at a truck stop so we could get rid of this truck and looked for another car or truck to get us to where we need to go.

Well we were looking for another car or truck, it's late at night, a highway patrol cop was creeping up on us and that's when he put the spotlight on us and said "Freeze, this is the police." First thing I said was "Ah shhh", but my mind was telling me that I had the power of speed like "Daredevil" so move and that's when I split hecka quick. Me and my friends ran toward the freeway and it was hecka scary running across the freeway at night trying not to get hit by any cars.

Well we got caught a little later and I told myself that I didn't have any powers 'cause you're just a human and that is it, and now you're on your way to the Stockton Juvenile Hall. Well we got booked into the Stockton Hall got our bedding and got escorted to where we are going to be staying for a while. It was a cool Juvenile, plus it was co-ed where everybody goes to school together but at the same time I was getting asked where I was from and I said Fresno and I got rushed by two boys and two girls saying this is Stockton gangbangers. I was putting down my blows left and right, but I wasn't trying to hit the girls, until one socked me in the jaw and I told her that she done messed up. So I swung my right fist and connected with her nose and she fell to the floor bleeding from her nose and the other girl backed off and let the guys handle me and I lasted more than a few minutes with them, then we stopped. They gave me my respect after that and I walked up to one of the girls and said I'm sorry but I wasn't trying to hit you.

Well my friends stayed at the Hall for a month until the sheriff came and got us to go back to Yreka Juvenile Hall and to go to court as well. Little did I know that my two so called friends snatched on me saying I was the first one in the truck and I was the one that pressured them into getting in.

Before my so called friends went home, I told them that when I get done doing my little 6 months at a group home I'm coming to look for you and I'm going to beat your butts. I stayed in the Juvenile Hall until there was a bed space at this group home in Redding, California called Green Acres, but I kept asking my caseworker what's if like over there? She said that it is hella nice, so don't mess up and so your 6 months so you can go home to your family. I asked her why all of a sudden is you caring if I do good or bad and she told me that she has a kind and caring heart, so I told her that I'll try best to be good.

I got to the group home and it was like paradise there, and they had a basketball court, weight room a big screen TV and four people to a little cottage. I had to go to school there as well and the hobby teacher told me to tell the staff that I need to get a model car or truck for class. Well the staff took us to the town called Redding to go to the store to pick out some model cars, and I picked out a 1965 Chevy Impala Hardtop Super Sport, plus the paint and rims as well.

We got back to the group home so I could call my mom and tell her where I'm at and that I'm doing fine. Well the next day all the kids at the group home went to school and I took my model car with me to school and at hobby class my teacher assigned me with this fine ass Mexican girl named Esmeralda Martinez and I told her where I was from and she did the same.

Her model car was a 1964 Chevy Impala Super Sport Hardtop and I can tell that she needed some help on hers. We both helped each other out on our cars, like doing a little on hers and a little on mine. I was going to slam my car to the ground 'cause that's the way I like model cars and when she seen me do that she wanted me to slam her car just like mine and I said that I ain't got no problem on that, so I started working on her model and getting it to be as low as mine. Our models were done and painted and before the end of the day I asked her for her hook up and I gave her my mom's address 'cause I told her if anything happens to me, keep my model car in memory of me, and to write my mom and let her know what happened to me.

I have her a letter explaining what went down, but I told her to open it in two days then write my mom and she said ok. When I got back to the group home all hell broke loose, 'cause some white dudes started to try and act hard with me, by trying to start a fight with me. That night I was in the weight room lifting some weights when these big white kids came inside with baseball bats and chains, but the chains were for locking the doors to prevent anybody from coming inside. When they were inside they said we going to kill you, you piece of shhh.

I picked up this bar and told them that when I go down, I'm taking you with me so lets get ready to rock and roll. I turned up the radio full blast and when the first person stepped towards me, I swung the bar at his knees and breaking one. I got hit in the head with a bat and I'm like damn that hurt, then I said to hell with this bar 'cause I'm going to take my chances without it and when we got done there was so much blood on the walls, I'm like where did that come from?

To be continued...

I gave her my mom's address 'cause I told her if anything happens to me, keep my model car in memory of me, and to write my mom and let her know what happened to me.

HORACE BELL

Look who is finally back in our pages of The Beat, and we're sure he too is surprised to find his work finally in our pages once again. That's our biggest problem, with The BWO pages, too many of our finest writers and artists get lost in the shuffle. Our apologies go out to freelance writer Horace Bell and to any other writer/artist who has felt his/her work neglected by us. Sorry and thanks for your patience. With that said, we welcome back the hard hitting poetry of one of our oldest contributors, Horace Bell, who writes us from the CSTF (California Substance Abuse Treatment Facility) State Prison in Corcoran CA.

An Excerpt Of My Life

This journal/diary is written in prison, my place of confinement, it's targeted at people who have never been to jail and who will never come here. This is why in some sense such a piece of work proceeds obliquely.

I now write the forbidden words flinging them down on paper, the accursed words, the words covered with blood, the unwritten words of prison life. These words are written here, uttering out the suffocating misery of a solitude human being, which isn't accepted which is flogged only by what this person is deprived of, justice and freedom!

It is therefore prudent that any of this text which reaches the public should reach the public from this deep dark hole as though mutilated, pruned of its overly tumultuous adornments. It is behind these walls and bars that my readers if you dare, will discover the infamy of a situation which a respectable intellectual cannot reinstate, and behind the permitted words listen for the falsely accused convict.

I was captured and brought to prison when I was fifteen years old because I couldn't adjust. The record that law enforcement compiled on my activities reads like the record of five men. They labeled me car thief, bank robber, and juvenile delinquent.

I was born with Malaria September 5, 1954 in Dallas Memorable Hospital in Texas. My mother was a country girl from Long View, Texas. My father a truck driver. To this day I never knew why my mom left Texas in a hurry, I haven't seen my father since.

We were living on 125th and Success in Compton, CA. Part ghetto, part farmland, upstairs in a small place, six kids and a mother alone. We soon relocated to 118th and Holmes, a two-story house on the corner, I remember the elementary school was just down the block, a quarter of the way before you reached the corner. I had a sister name Lauren, who at the time was a teenager, a very pretty girl who died of cancer in 1967 along with my brother Selva, a double funeral followed.

Our third move to 119th Street, across the tracks, proved dangerous for me, I went out of the house as I pleased. I don't recall much about any traumatic events in elementary, but this move caused me to climb roofs, with my sister Lauren trailing me like a Saint Bernard (dog).

I was thinking of jumping off a roof which proved irresistible! As soon as my sister saw what I was going to do it was too late I had reached the mountain top. I moved closer and closer to the edge and jumped, I landed hard on my palms, one of which slit open. Lauren ran home and got mother, I was taken to the hospital and received stitches, I still carry that scar on my left palm from that day's experience.

In '65 we moved to 59th Place between Hooper Avenue and Compton Street. My first errand to the supermarket, two local punks waited and while one in front of me ask for the money which I refused, the other punk was in back of me on all fours. When the punk in front pushed me, I fell over his buddy on the ground.

Before I could get up and fight the cowards, my moms' store money was scooped up and both punks ran.

Then came the 1965 Watts' Riots, Mick Jagger's, "I Can't Get No Satisfaction" could be heard being played loudly on the speaker outside the local record shop. I recall seeing also bus load after bus load of rioting Blacks being bus to jail.

I spent most of those summers in and out of juvenile hall on East Lake Street, a short distance from General Hospital, known now as LCMC. I was an extremely aggressive kid and in my era it meant crime, since jobs for youth in that period were hard to find.

I saw local police as scum and scorned them with special enmity. My family knew very little of my real life, in effect I lived two lives, the one my mom and sisters and brother, and my adventures in the street. I left home a thousand times never to return, I hoboed up and down the state, I did what I wanted all my life, all my life I've done just that.

My mother was poor like a lot of people back then, I have a lot of Indian in me, my mothers' mother was Blackfoot Indian, yet my mom had a terribly mindless, displaced, irresponsible child on her hands.

Serious things started to happen with me, but my mother never abandoned me. She felt shame in having to visit me in juvenile hall and picking me up at police stations out of encounters with the pig! But she would always be there!

Eventually I got arrested for car theft and was sentenced to Youth Camp, I stayed the night and escaped the next day. I told a firefighter I was visiting and my ride left me, he dropped me off in New Hall, CA. I rode the bus downtown and went home, but mom ask me to turn myself back in.

My very first time that far away from home was like dying. It wasn't like in Juvenile Hall downtown Los Angeles. Being locked up in that camp with a couple of hundred guys was call for some heavy psychic readjustments. Being captured was the first of my fears.

The pigs at Juvenile Hall, camp, and prison are the same general types found lounging at all facilities, they need a job, any job, the state needs goons. All my life I've done exactly what I wanted to do just when I wanted, no more, perhaps less sometimes but never anymore which explains why I had to be jailed, locked up.

I was born free and with half my life already sent in prison. I can't truthfully say prison is any less painful now than during my first experience. In my early prison years, I read "Games People Play" by Dr. Eric Berne, particularly transactional analysis, a structure class derived from the book.

Captured, imprisonment is the closest to being dead that one is likely to experience in this life. I took LSD, smoked hash, ran, played basketball, pumped iron, I didn't mess with the pig. Yet I met hardcore convicts and programmed myself to survive.

Finally I had sex upon release, Mr. Garfield shared a hooker with me, it was the joy of my life, but that first time is still the best. Later I pleaded guilty to 1-14 years and entered San Quentin Prison, there I studied psychology, sociology, journalism, and English literature.

HORACE BELL (CONT.)

The Ring

How could you be so stupid
And think I was naïve,
That your lies would go unnoticed
And I'd be deceived...

You made a mistake though
And misused my trust,
You and your investigator
Full of greed and lust...

I am not the one
To set aside hope,
I am not that person
You will hang with a rope!

I had faith in you
But I was wrong,
Now I'm like all the others
Singing my song...

It's my fight now
I'll step into the ring,
But I won't stop fighting
Until the fat lady sings...

Flames

Behind shut lids
Between eye and brain,
I am riding on this
Prison train...

Dark anger
Bitter resentment,
A life
Without contentment...

Outside my window
I hear a mournful weep,
Every time I doze
I am jarred from sleep...

Am I to go crazy
On this ghastly train?
Or am I riding
Into hell's flames?

**I won't
stop fighting
Until the fat
lady sings**

Don't Come Back

Here I am
Stuck in the county jail,
Stressing
Pacing in my cell...

Thinking about yesterday
When I had my say,
My own sense of direction
I could pick the way...

Now that I am detained
I must do what I am told,
The officials who wear the badge
Wear it very bold...

They try to teach you
Whatever you lack,
Get it on the inside
Make sure you don't come back...

When you come to jail
You've made a big mistake,
For all that you stand for
Is now at stake...

Lost

Now I hurt
I feel the pain,
I felt it last night
While it rained...

Why me?
What did I do?
Just gave all my love
And heart to you...

I sacrificed
Didn't gamble,
I took a chance
One big stumble...

Now I am paying
The ultimate cost,
What we all pay
To be boss...

Don't make me suffer
A great big loss,
I'd rather be nailed
To a cross...

Miracle

For all my life
It seems I've been alone,
But in spite of the circumstances
I stood strong...

There's been times
I've asked myself why?
And other times
I broke down to cry...

During these periods
One thing was on my mind,
Will I find happiness
Before the end of time...

Life has taken me
On a roller coaster ride,
And through the drops and swirls
The spin and dips, I still
survived...

I've seen my share
But not like this,
I need a miracle
A different twist...

**Will I find happiness
Before the end of time**

DAVE ANDERSON

Dave Anderson is a long-time Beat Without contributor, and hopefully, a patient one since we've had his pieces for more than a minute. We're happy that he continues to find the time and desire to step up and teach and share. Dave writes us from Calipatria State Prison in Calipatria.

Your Eyes

The look on your face is so revealing
As I glance into your eyes I can see your feelings
The love, the anger, and being confused
Should you follow through or will I be excused?
I want you so bad I feel physical pain
And when I gaze into your eyes, I feel like going insane
Fate and destiny go hand-and-hand
But then why was I brought to you when you already had a man?
All these questions I can't seem to explain
But I continue to want to as my heart feels the pain
Just say the word, girl, and I'll be your man
But no matter what, my heart is in your hands

Here I am for
all to see
An outcast,
society's freak

Built To Last

Living in this world of madness
Daily life is filled with sadness
Struggling just to stay above
Trying to find and Issue of love
Will I make it through tomorrow?
Can I survive the pain and sorrow?
Day by day I live life fast
On I go, built to last

Here I am for
all to see
An outcast,
society's freak



Riddles

My mind speaks in riddles
My thoughts all twisted 'round
A prisoner of what's said to be
I feel gagged and bound

Shut off from what once was mine
Now a shattered memory
Can't get ahold of this mixed up place
This is my reality

Chained to the wall of life
No room to walk or speak
Here I am for all to see
An outcast, society's freak

I never imagined it'd end like this
Locked away from all I love
Railroaded into oblivion
Dropped into hell from above

The Love

Every time I see you, my heart loses control
And when you look into my eyes
I can feel you search my soul
How can you love me, why do you still care?
It's hard to understand, because I'm hardly ever there
I'm always acting stupid ending up in some jail cell
You just stand strong by my side as I put you through this hell,
I told you that you could leave
That I would set you free
But nothing comes between the love
Shared by you and me

EUGENE WEEMS

how even the most powerful love fades.

Beat OG Eugene Weems has recently been transferred from Soledad to Lancaster State Prison. He sends us some new love poems about the how sweet women taste, the folly of being a player, and

**Just imagine if your woman
was a player like you
How would you feel and what
would you do?**

Taste Just Like Candy

Have you ever come across a woman
who smells so good when you walked by
And all you smell is her perfume that gives you a natural high?
Its unknown fragrance is so irresistible to all mankind
As you think to yourself, "This woman must be mine"
You go after her and ask her what's her name
As you stare into her eyes,
you become hypnotized and can't pull away
The smell you can't resist; she tells you it's peaches and cream
The closer you get to her, your mind telling you she's the woman
of your dreams
Everything about her is enchanting
and everything she wears is sweet
Smelling like strawberries one day and vanilla the next
Everything about his woman is lovely, even the mole on her neck
She looks alike she can melt in your mouth, but not in your hand
So I asked what sweets she likes—
strawberries and whipped cream
So can I be your ice cream man
She was like an apple tree that I had to have
So I pulled it up from the root to take her home with me
And taste her forbidden fruit
She smelled so good, her hair was shinning like silk
And it seemed like honey was on her lips,
and I was hungry like a baby is for milk
I couldn't resist, I had to have her, I'm guilty to the third degree
And if I went to court for having her, the jury will find me guilty
Grab all the toys you need, some handcuffs may come in handy
'Cause she will jump when she feels your tongue
And you'll see she tastes just like candy

Infuriated

Have you ever had a girl who gets really mad?
Who will curse you out,
because you have caused her to be sad?
She accuses you of cheating and making her cry
Breaking her heart, and telling her lies
You think nothing of it, but deep down her heart I broke
She wonders if you are faithful,
or if you're playing her for a joke
She tells you that the relationship you have with her is
not based on trust
Yours is based on lies and nothing but lust
She is now infuriated with you,
'cause you played her for a fool
She's feeling suicidal
and also wants to take your life, too
A player is what you claim to be, sometimes a gigolo, a
pimp, and even a mack
When you see a bad chick and try to holla at that
You spit the verbals to what she wants to hear
While caressing her hand and enchanting her with an
attentive stare
The whisper of sweet words,
telling her she's your queen
As you place a cubic zirconium on her finger, which
she thought was a diamond ring
Just imagine if your woman was a player like you
How would you feel and what would you do?
So keep that in mind,
the next time you feel the need to tell her a lie
About something you did
and you want to keep confined
When a woman becomes fed up with your mess, she's
not going to go out like that
She starts thinking "retaliation, revenge, get back"
Soon she will attack
And that's when all hell will break loose
It will be too late for a truce
Because you wanted to be a player
And now she's about to make your life a living hell
Then you will know how it feels,
to get the end of a raw deal

Fading Away

Have you ever had a woman in your life that you really cared for?
She always made you smile and had the extra key to your door
The door was your heart and she made herself at home
She would always comfort you, and never left you to be alone
Constantly she's by your side, like a shadow, just to show her love
She showers you with her affection, and wonders what you might be thinking of
You told her how you felt about her and how you feel within
Made plans to get married and would never bring your love to an end
No matter how much you dogged her, she never budged from your side
Months pass but nothing changes, other than the date and time
The storm came and nothing changes; she still didn't budge
She just remains the same, loving you in a special way
Your love had grown strong, although you may have tripped and fell down
She helps you up and smiles to assure you that you are not alone
Then things went downhill and now she disappears
Leavin' you confused, wondering where has your angel gone
The sorrow really hurts and it's tearing your heart apart
The angel you love seems to have moved on
Your love seems to be fading away, because you don't hear from her anymore
She quietly gave you back the key to your heart and didn't close the door
Now your heart is overflowing with tears,
Because she was your everything, and now she just suspiciously disappeared
If only you had the chance to ask her why didn't she stay
She will say, "I had a change of heart, and my love was fading away"

**She always
made you smile
and had the
extra key to
your door
The door was
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and she made
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MR. ARTHUR LEE HENDERSON

Please welcome Mr. Arthur Lee Henderson, Sr., from Lancaster State Prison, and his amazing raps and songs to The Beat Within. "Justice" is a rap song to raise awareness about the harms of racial tags. "Our Baby Girl" is a song, a call to awareness and to honor Carlie Brucia and the foundation he hopes to start for her. He intends "Our Baby Girl" to become an anthem for all exploited children.

Our Baby Girls, America's Daughter

(In Memory of Carlie Brucia)
We don't want to live without you
Baby Girl, but we must
So we turn to God
In Whom we trust
We don't want to live without you
Baby girl
Nor do we understand
Why me must
So we turn to God
In Whom we trust
We don't want to live without
Baby girl, but we must
We don't always understand parts of God's plans
So we pray to Him
In Whom we trust
We don't want to live without you
Baby girl, but we must
We're not even sure we can
Though we must
So we pray to God
In Whom we trust
We don't want to live without you
Baby girl, but we must
Losing you has placed a heavy burden
On each and every one of us
So we pray to God
In Whom we trust
We don't want to live without you
Baby girl, but we must
Our only comfort is knowing you're with Him
In Whom we trust
We don't want to live without you
Baby girl, but we must
Now that your journey has taken you away from us
We pray to God
In Whom we trust
We don't want to live without you
Baby girl, but we must
So we look to God
In Whom we trust
Knowing your journey has taken you
To join God
In Whom we trust
Together we pray and try to comfort
All of those
You left with us

Justice

Some see the race card as only a name
While others see the race card as just a game
Though the race card is neither just a name
And it can never be considered some kind of game
Because the race card is real
And can kill us all
So check it
Check it
It doesn't matter if it's used as a last resort
Or if it's used as a justice of sorts
Check it
Check it
Because the race card is real
And can kill us all
So check it
Check it
Because it ain't no joke, joke, joke
So check it
Check it
Because the race card is never just a name
Nor was it ever really a game
The race card is real
And can kill us all
And it ain't no joke, joke, joke
So we gotta check it
Check it
Check it
Before its harm can grow
We gotta check it
Check it
Because the race card is never just a name
Nor was it ever meant to be a part of a game
The race card is real
And can kill us all
The race card's harm
Is its first alarm
And it ain't no joke, joke, joke
Because the race card is never just a name
And never will it ever be just a game
Because it was never meant to be a part of a game
The race card is real
And can kill us all
So never let race be a part of your joke
Because it ain't no joke, joke, joke
The race card is real, real, real
And it ain't no joke, joke, joke
And it can kill us all all all
And it ain't no joke
So check it, check it
Because it ain't no joke
So check it, check it
Because it ain't no joke

The Vision Of Beauty

A warning to anyone thinking of recoloring the world
To limit one's color selection to Black and White
Is to invite poor vision and to promote poor health
Black does not reflect all of the world's ills
Nor does White reflect all of the world's
purities
And no amount of mixing of the two can
ever replace
The beauty of a multi-colored world
Nor a healthy
Appreciation for such an array of eye-
friendly
Colors

**help us create new jobs and
opportunities for those Americans**

No American Left Behind

Attention, every man, woman and child not valued in mainstream America
Is now being sought after for American's booming incarceration complexes
This is our official notice to you all, that your person is needed
To help us create new jobs and opportunities for those Americans
Recently laid off due to various forms of white-collar corruption
America's laws, like our times, continue to change, so your possible
Reentry into our society looks as bright as ever,
According to America's newest stimulus proposals for economic growth and recovery
Endorsed:
By...more names to be added, as more leaders sign on

I can see the guard walk past my cell, skeleton keys clinking against his worn metal baton. In his hands a stack of letters, but not a one with my family name on it. Not a one...

check out the rest of Israel Perez BWO piece on page 66